

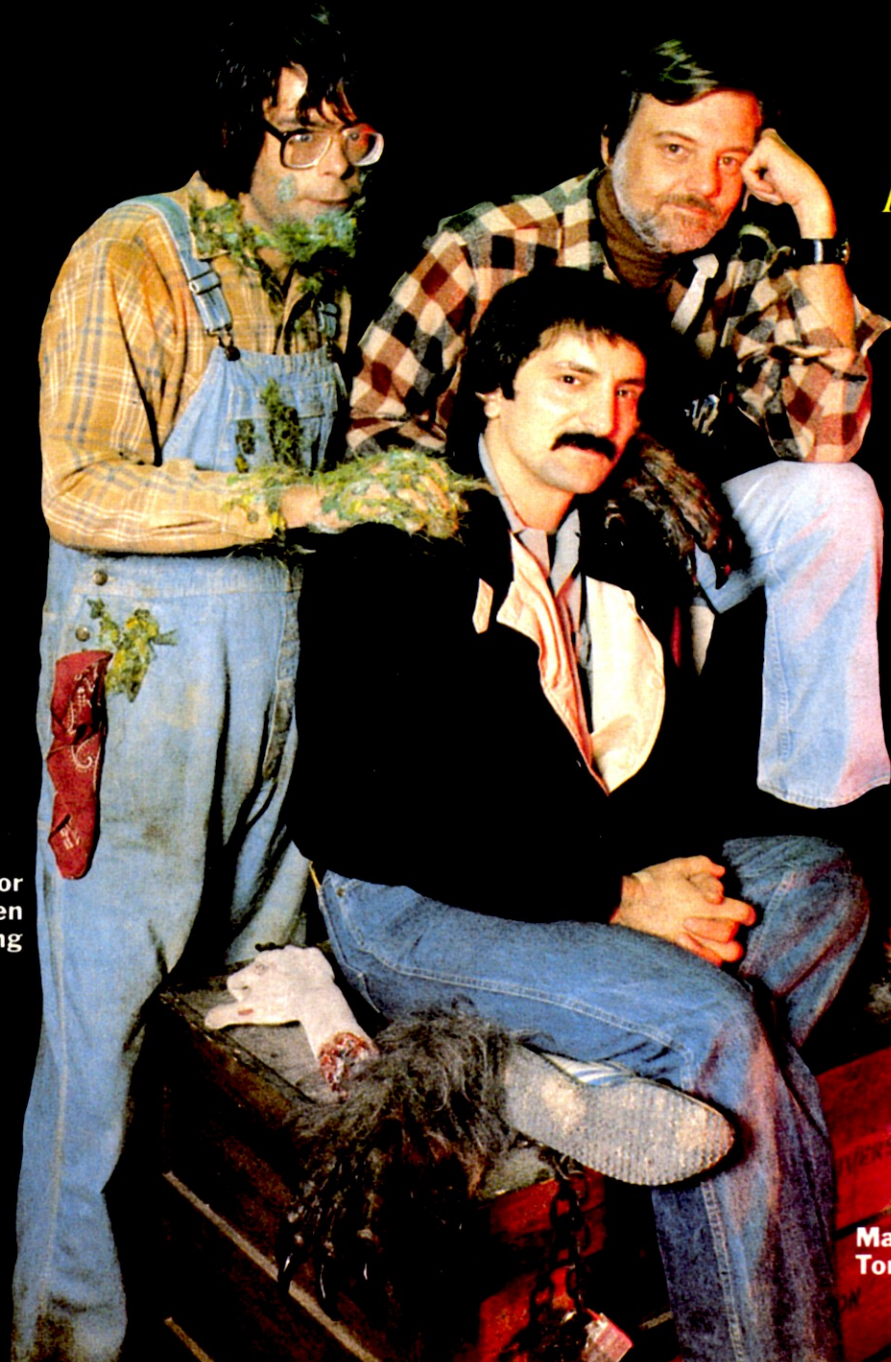
CINEFANTASTIQUE

BEHIND-THE-SCENES COVERAGE! (P. 51)
E.T.

Volume 13 Number 1

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ARE THESE THE SCARIEST MEN IN AMERICA?



Individually, they've terrified millions. Now they've joined forces to make "Creepshow," a chilling tribute to the late, great E. C. Comics.

Director
George Romero

Author
Stephen King

Makeup artist
Tom Savini

KRULL



It's Columbia Pictures' \$20 million gamble. Next summer, when *REVENGE OF THE JEDI*, the third segment in the *STAR WARS* saga, hits movie screens, Columbia is betting that audiences will be talking about the adventures of their Princess Lyssa instead of Princess Leia.

You can size up the competition in the next issue of *CINEFANTASTIQUE*, an exclusive preview devoted to the making of *KRULL*. Director Peter Yates explains his approach to science/fantasy entertainment. Yates is the director of the sensitive coming-of-age story *BREAKING AWAY* and *BULLITT*, the film that firmly established the car chase in the vocabulary of every action picture.

You'll learn about the Glave (above), the spinning five-bladed weapon that is the mystical symbol of the planet Krull and a relic of its ancient past; meet its cast of characters, including Rell, the Cyclops (bottom left) and adventurer Prince Colwyn (top left); see the filming, like the charge of the Firemares (top right), from behind-the-scenes to final effects composite; and learn how staggering preproduction concepts like the Black Fortress (bottom right) were realized on screen.

Writer Dan Scapperotti was an on-set observer of the production of *KRULL* in England, and interviewed more than a dozen key members of the film's cast and crew. It's all in the next exciting issue of *CINEFANTASTIQUE* and nowhere else!

CINEFANTASTIQUE

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Start my subscription to *CINEFANTASTIQUE* right away, and rush me the special issue devoted to Peter Yates' *KRULL* just as soon as it's off the presses, mailed flat to arrive in absolutely perfect condition. I've enclosed a check or money order for the offer checked below.

Four issues \$14 (Foreign \$17) Eight issues \$26 (Foreign \$31) Twelve issues \$36 (Foreign \$43)

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VOL 13 NO 1

"The E.T. of Wonder."

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER, 1982

The summer of '82 is now history, and a new high point for *cinefantastique*, both artistically and in terms of boxoffice performance for horror, fantasy and science fiction films. It is, of course, the summer of E.T., a film that appears destined to become more popular than even STAR WARS. But in addition to the unexpected emergence of E.T. as a full-blown cultural phenomenon, two of the summer's other big hits were also genre films: STAR TREK II and POLTERGEIST (see Boxoffice Survey, page 12).

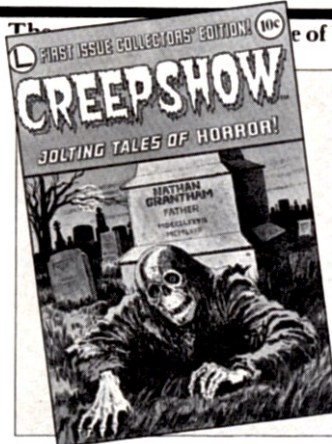
These films triggered not just the "sense of wonder" of genre fans like you and me, but fired the imagination of a filmgoing public increasingly receptive to the mind-expanding joys of *cinefantastique*. Without believing in or accepting the existence of ghosts, star travel or space creatures, a lot of people have cast off the rigid mind-set that used to ghettoize the genre as something fit only for kids and dreamers.

Steven Spielberg's E.T. epitomizes that "sense of wonder" experience, the exhilarating feeling most people used to find only in church, which comes from being confronted with the unknown, the impossible and the transcendental. It's an experience people crave, a tingly, shuddery feeling of awe that probably dates back to the atavistic fears and yearnings of primitive man. Children have no trouble tapping into it, but for sophisticated adult audiences, it's hard to come by.

Maybe that's why E.T. is such a roaring success. For a movie that might have been labeled a kid's film, a surprising number of adults are lining up at the boxoffice, often more than once. The film lets them suspend their disbelief and regain a lost capacity for awe and wonderment.

Spielberg is obviously a filmmaker comfortably in touch with his own "sense of wonder" to transmit it so effortlessly to those who are not. That comes across as sincerity, a confidence and creative self-assurance in material that could have been laughable in less steady hands.

Frederick S. Clarke



CREEPSHOW

17 MASTERS OF THE MACABRE

Stephen King's horror novels, George Romero's zombie films and Tom Savini's gory makeup effects have shocked millions of people. Now, working together for the first time, they've created a chilling tribute to the E.C. horror comics of the 1950s.

Article by Paul R. Gagne

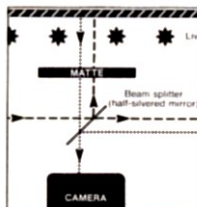


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Article by David J. Hogan



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K U R T V O N N E G U T ' S

SLAPSTICK

A low-budget whiz kid packages a best-seller with big names, unique makeups and dazzling effects.



by David J. Hogan

It doesn't *sound* like a Jerry Lewis movie. SLAPSTICK, adapted from the best-selling novel by Kurt Vonnegut, will star Jerry Lewis and Madeline Kahn as two 7-foot-tall, 15 year-old, grotesquely malformed twins whose combined intellects can solve all the world's problems. Now in postproduction, the film is set for a September premiere in France (the French have always considered Lewis a comic genius). A U.S. distribution deal is still to be made, but a late fall or winter domestic release seems likely.

The project is the realization of many years effort by director, producer, and co-screenwriter (with Vonnegut), 24 year-old Steven Paul. His intent, he said, has been "to marry the book's intellectual humor with Jerry's working-class approach," and to "make dreams reality." An ambitious project in light of the \$4 million budget and short 8½ week shoot.

The price tag is especially lean considering all the special effects envisioned for the film. The movie will utilize stop-motion animation, complex front projection, miniatures, and prosthetic makeups to tell the poignant tale of Wilbur and Eliza Swain, who literally put their heads together and with their combined brain-power can solve any problem.

Unloved by their parents, also played by Lewis and Kahn in dual roles, the twins are farmed out to the care of servants and doctors. Their uniqueness is appreciated only by the Chinese, whose disgust with the rest of the world has caused them to close their borders and miniaturize their entire population. The Chinese have mastered all scientific knowledge except "the true nature of gravity," and covet the twins' knowledge of it.

Within this bizarre context, the film shifts from scenes of pathetic abandonment and loneliness to the chaos of a food fight. Audiences will see a flying saucer shaped like a fortune cookie, two inch tall Chinese, even extraterrestrials.

Besides producing, directing, and writing, Paul has been an actor for 18 years. He already has one other feature film to his credit, FALLING IN LOVE AGAIN. Also, Paul is a master at self-promotion (his office is lined with framed copies of breathless newspaper and magazine stories about him), but he insists that SLAPSTICK is more than another gimmick to get his name in lights.

Paul met Kurt Vonnegut while appearing in the Broadway version of *Happy Birthday Wanda June*. "Kurt, told me I saved the play," Paul said, "and he promised to write something just for me." Vonnegut never did, but a 10-page excerpt from *Slapstick* published in *Playboy* caught Paul's eye in 1976. "I loved it," he said. "It was visual and sensitive. I just *saw* it as a film."

Paul immediately called Vonnegut from Hollywood to express interest in purchas-

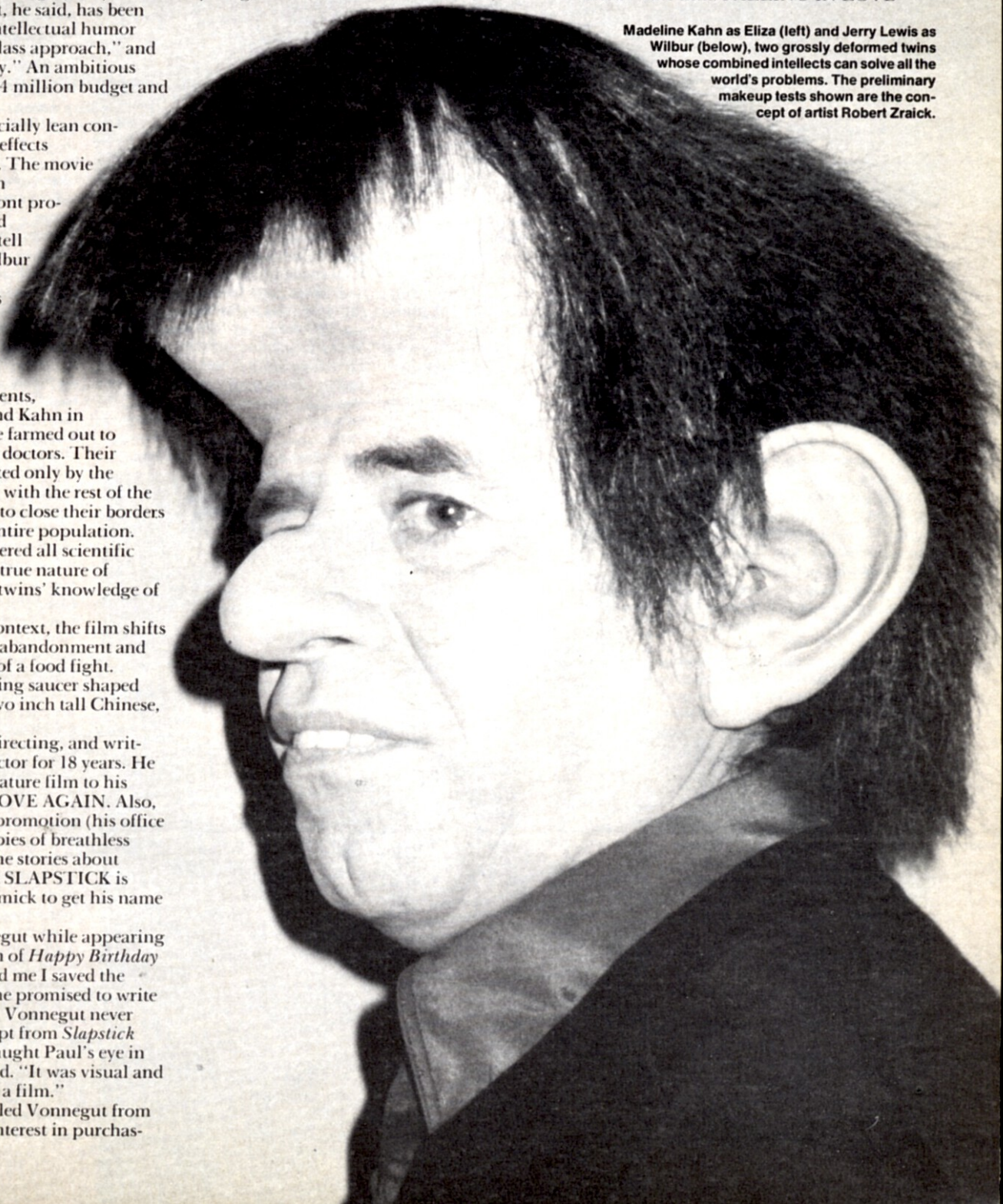
ing the screen rights. The author, hesitant to deal with a 17 year-old, suggested that Paul contact him "the next time you're in New York." Paul was on a plane that night, armed with concept sketches and wearing a button that said, "Lonesome No More," a phrase that recurs in the novel. Vonnegut was impressed when shown a 16mm film project Paul had made, and made a deal for \$250,000, accepting \$25,000 down and agreeing to take the balance of the money in installments.

"So, I had the rights to *Slapstick*," said Paul, "which went on the *New York Times* best-seller list for six months. But I couldn't make a deal with the picture. I had a couple of things working against me: first, being young, no track record at all. Second,

producers felt Vonnegut's work doesn't translate well to film. I responded that maybe the films of his novels were the problem, but I still couldn't sell the project. It's been an upward climb."

Temporarily frustrated, Paul learned the ins and outs of independent filmmaking when he went ahead with FALLING IN LOVE AGAIN, a nostalgic romance that opened to good reviews in 1980. In order to raise the capital necessary to get the picture off the ground, he pressed flesh at Cannes and other film marketplaces, approached wealthy friends of his father's, and learned the fine art of convincing actors and crew to accept deferred payment for their services. Paul produced, directed, co-wrote, and acted in the film. FALLING IN LOVE

Madeline Kahn as Eliza (left) and Jerry Lewis as Wilbur (below), two grossly deformed twins whose combined intellects can solve all the world's problems. The preliminary makeup tests shown are the concept of artist Robert Zraick.





Makeup artists Steve LaPorte (foreground) and Robert Zraick finalize the makeup concepts for Wilbur and Eliza on casts made from lifemasks of Lewis and Kahn.



Artist Ve Neill, the third member of the film's makeup team, applies a foam latex forehead piece to Madeline Kahn, the first step in Kahn's transformation into Eliza.

AGAIN was his "learning process;" thus armed, he put together SLAPSTICK in much the same manner.

Originally, Paul envisioned SLAPSTICK as a \$5 million to \$8 million venture. He confidently signed Lewis, Kahn, Marty Feldman, and Jim Backus. Kurt Vonnegut agreed to collaborate on the screenplay. "I tried to get him to write what I wanted," Paul said. Apparently, he succeeded since the script's optimism is in marked contrast with the deadened pessimism of the novel.

Vonnegut's primary themes remain, but the altered tone is revealed by the plethora of whimsical special effects the script calls for. Most noticeable are the prosthetic makeup which transform Lewis and Kahn into 7' monsters. SLAPSTICK is the first screen credit for makeup supervisor Robert Zraick. Zraick was originally hired as a makeup consultant, but once the budget constraints became clear, Paul realized he could not afford a high-priced veteran and Zraick was retained to follow through on the concepts he created.

Zraick is a former Ringling Brothers circus clown, who taught makeup technique in clown college, and has worked in Hollywood on the Universal Studio Tours. His expertise with mechanical effects served him when he designed the Galactica segment of the tour, which involved construction of robots and choreography of laser effects.

His conception of the twins' appearances went through a number of stages. Before Madeline Kahn was cast, Paul envisioned the twins as identical, which, of course, meant that both would look like Jerry Lewis. Needless to say, that was one idea that Kahn was not crazy about. The actress also objected to an excessive use of cosmetics on her skin. Jerry Lewis

resisted any mask that would inhibit the freedom of the comedian's facial movement.

Coarse yak hair wigs, spinning top-knots, ear-wigglers, and pulsing forehead veins were considered as makeup concepts and then discarded. Two weeks before the scheduled start of principal photography, a test makeup was judged inappropriate. Zraick worked feverishly to alter the design; his final concept is at once startling and uncannily natural. Both Lewis and Kahn wear carefully-molded

appliances that enlarge their foreheads, noses, and ears. Casts of their teeth provided the basis for protruding uppers.

"The key to the makeup was subtlety," Zraick explained. "I could have made them horrible, but that would not have been supportive to the story. The twins have a symbiotic relationship and are very bright. We had to make sure the audience identifies with them as human beings. Their appearance had to be startling, but we had to go for empathy too. The overall effect is

that they look like giant babies—little faces in big heads."

Because Zraick had limited experience with movie makeup and no lab of his own, he hired Steve LaPorte to assist him. Though only 26, LaPorte has numerous film credits, including UNDER THE RAINBOW, THE HOWLING, POPEYE, and the still-to-be-released SUPERSTITION. Inspired by Dick Smith and encouraged by Rick Baker, LaPorte has become skilled at gruesome effects makeup and accepted SLAPSTICK because of its unique challenge.

"The project has class," said LaPorte. "I did it for art, and turned down three horror movies while I was doing it." LaPorte ran off most of the SLAPSTICK molds in his garage lab, and was responsible for much of the actual application onto the actors. He traveled to Las Vegas to catch up to Jerry Lewis in order to make the necessary life mask. "It was a little scary when I walked into his dressing room," LaPorte recalled. "Here was Jerry Lewis, who's made me laugh all my life, and now I was going to smear plaster all over his face."

Lewis took the plastering, and every other aspect of the filming very well. Even the normally confident Steven Paul admitted having trepidations about dealing with the temperamental man whom he calls his "idol." But everyone connected with the production raved about the actor's professionalism and willingness to help.

"Jerry was great," said LaPorte. "Some days he'd come in for makeup and just break us up with his clowning around. Other times he'd go to sleep in the chair." The facial appliances were stable and very comfortable. Lewis once went home still sporting the false nose.

Vitally-important skills were provided by makeup artist Ve

Steven Paul, the 24 year-old director, poses on the set of the twins' bedroom.



Niell, one of the very few women in the field who has practical knowledge of appliances and lab work. Zraick relied upon Niell's knowledge of color matching appliances with flesh to help make the twins appear as natural as possible. "Appliances can go gray on Kodak film," said Neill. "On a test we tried Fuji film and found that the colors came out true."

There were other problems as well. Madeline Kahn's resistance to cosmetics was compounded by an allergic reaction to the adhesive used with the appliances. Niell was eventually able to blend the different elements of Kahn's makeup with minimal irritation to the actress' skin. Since Wilbur and Eliza are children, the makeups have no wrinkles that could be used to obscure blend lines. The character's faces had to be almost baby-smooth.

Jerry Lewis, who is in his mid-50s refused to wear facial lifts that would have made his features appear younger, choosing instead to suggest Wilbur's youthfulness by sheer force of personality. Madeline Kahn's face is unlined, and an especially innocent look was achieved with application of white makeup around the perimeter of her eyes.

The makeup team also credits cinematographer Tony Richmond (*DON'T LOOK NOW, THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH*) for further enhancing the twin's features, with creative lighting and general sensitivity to the characters' personalities.

Because the twins' genius is enhanced when they work together, director Paul asked for makeup effects that would suggest great mental concentration. Zraick designed the forehead appliances so that they could be made to pulse any time the effect was desired. Twin air bladders were placed over



Author Kurt Vonnegut (right) visits the set with director Steven Paul and Madeline Kahn.

the rigid polyurethane base of each appliance, and then covered with latex. Air tubes were built into the polyurethane and attached to longer tubes that ran off screen to squeeze bulbs. Both lobes of each forehead could be made to pulse, in unison or in alternation. The effect, according to Zraick, is "not extreme, but very funny."

Continuity problems may have endangered an ingenious hair gag designed by Zraick. The effect called for the twins' hair to entwine as they combine their brain power. Zraick devised tiny radio-controlled servo-motors that drew sections of false hair back into special openings at the top of the wigs. By carefully entwining the hair at the start, shooting at high-speed and

printing the footage in reverse, Zraick produced the uncanny effect. Less ambitious sequences in which the twins' bangs recede from their foreheads were accomplished with hidden pull-cables.

As suggested by the novel, Wilbur and Eliza will each appear about 7' tall on screen. Miniature props, angle shots, and split-screen photography contribute to the illusion. At one point Steven Paul even employed stilts. Like Robert Zraick, Steven LaPorte had been a professional clown, and had constructed stilts while with the circus. "Steven asked me to build a pair for Madeline," LaPorte recalled. "The makeup budget was tight to begin with, and he offered me next to nothing for the job, and he wanted

to keep the rights to the design. I refused to do it, and he wound up paying somebody else more for a design that didn't work properly." Kahn, reportedly, had some difficulty with the stilt devices.

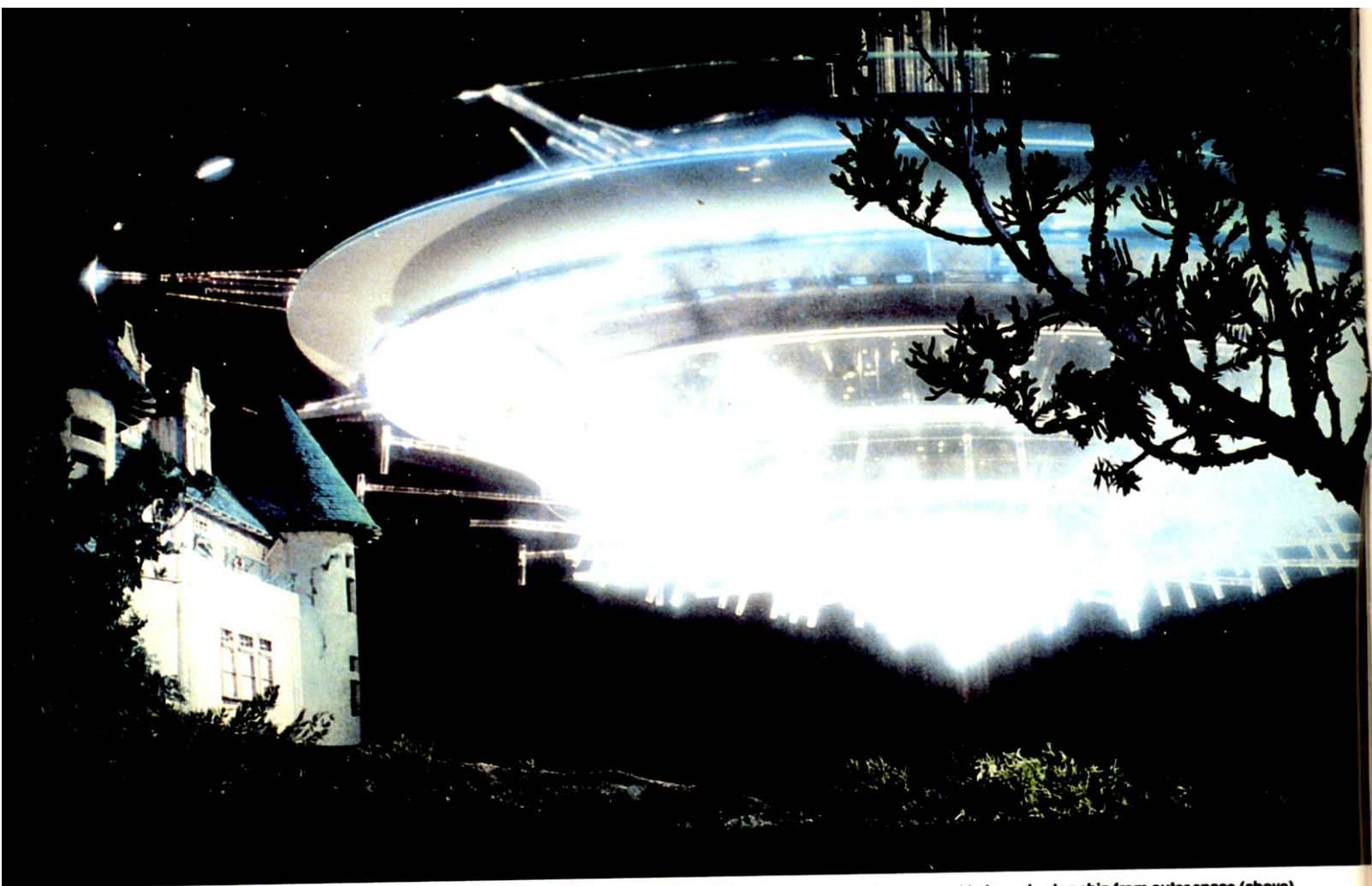
Unlike most recent effects-heavy pictures, the effectiveness of the makeup in *SLAPSTICK* will depend on how successfully they integrate with the characters and themes. The film aims to retain human drama as the foremost element in the film. This crucial consideration loomed large in the minds of the people at Private Stock Effects (PSE), a new special effects house that has handled *SLAPSTICK*'s stop-motion, front projection, and other opticals.

Co-owner Chuck Comisky was

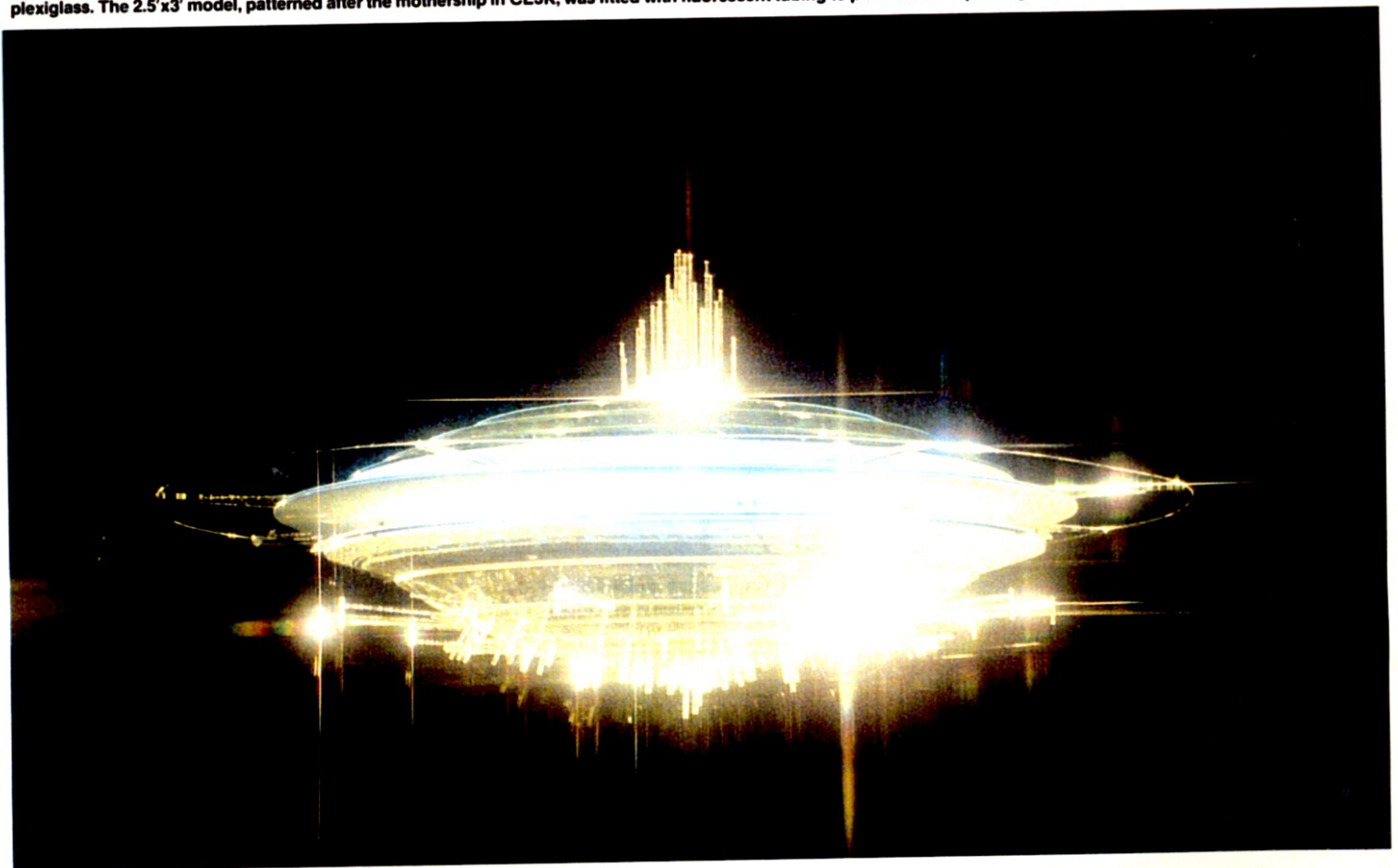


Director Steven Paul during filming (left) of composite elements of Pat Morita and the hatch of his fortune cookie flying saucer. Morita is an emissary of the Chinese, who miniaturized their population. The final composite (inset) is the work of Private Stock Effects.





When Eliza, watching from her bedroom window, sees a shooting star plummeting to earth just outside her home, it turns out to be a glowing ship from outer space (above). The shot was supplied by Private Stock Effects, a low-budget effects facility opened recently by Chuck Comisky, Ken Jones and Larry Benson. The Mansion was a nicely-detailed 3'x4' miniature, modeled after the real house used in the live-action shooting. The spaceship (shown fully, below) was designed and constructed by Bob Skotak out of plexiglass. The 2.5'x3' model, patterned after the mothership in CE3K, was fitted with fluorescent tubing to provide the requisite glow, enhanced by the use of on-set lighting.



responsible for the construction and operation of Roger Corman's New World Pictures effects studio in Venice, California. After the success of *BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS*, Comisky and partners Ken Jones and Larry Benson established PSE. The innovative company (its Elicon motion-repeat computer camera system is among the most sophisticated in the business) prepared the title sequence for John Frankenheimer's *THE CHALLENGE*, titles for a *MODESTY BLAISE* pilot, and won the contract for the effects work on Universal's *JAWS 3-D*.

From the start of PSE's involvement in *SLAPSTICK*, the project demanded an effects approach that would not overwhelm the more subtle aspects of the story. "Effects can be cold and uninvolved," said PSE production designer John Muto. "If there's anything I'm fighting for it's to really humanize the process. *SLAPSTICK* is an effects film that has a very human side to it."

For example, one scene is of Eliza after she has been separated from Wilbur. Lonely, she pines away in a dusty attic, a bat her only companion as she sings a sad song for her brother. As she finishes the song the camera pulls back and out of the attic window. Outside stars sparkle in the night sky and one plummet to earth. In a moment we see it's not a star at all, but a glowing spaceship. Eliza is not alone.

In this poignant scene, PSE used a whole range of special effects to achieve subtle touches. Stop-motion animation, traveling mattes, miniatures, and front projection were all employed to heighten the mood and emotion of the scene.

The bat was the work of animator Ernie Farino, who built the armatures for *CAVEMAN*. He used the front-light back-light technique of stop-motion animation to generate traveling mattes in-camera. The mansion, seen in the pull-back shot, is a beautifully detailed miniature (about 3'x4'), modeled after the real mansion used in live-action shooting. When Eliza is visible in the attic window, it is as a front-projected image. In order to increase the illusion of depth, a light bulb and ceiling beam were matted into the shot behind Kahn's head. At one point in the camera's move away from the window, these elements seem to momentarily disappear behind the window frame; the effect is nearly flawless.

The sparkling spaceship evolved from an original conception as a formless mass of lighted shapes to a detailed plexiglass model. Designer Bob Skotak intentionally patterned the 2½'x3' craft after the mothership seen in *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND*, and fitted it with fluorescent tubing that would provide the requisite glow.

Another flying ship, the tiny fortune cookie saucer flown by the miniaturized Chinese, posed some tricky questions about the stylistic approach to the flying effects. "Comedic special effects are so difficult to do," said John Muto. "If it's CE3K you can be real slow and ponderous—impressive—but we're going for saucer effects that will remind people of the old Chuck Jones cartoons. We have to be light and lively."

Further complicating matters for PSE were considerations of context. "Most of the effects," said Bob Skotak, "are in dialogue scenes. The coordination of effects with live action is very hard. We have to be right on the nose with the live action's pacing and drama. Our limits have been set for us in advance. We couldn't be real flashy and make people say 'Oh Wow, an effects shot!' We have no room to experiment."

One effect, flashing lights that circle the twins' heads when they think in tandem, was inexpensively done by simply scratching the emulsion. PSE hopes to develop a reputation as an effects house that can create quality work on a budget; with *SLAPSTICK* this has been absolutely essential. The film's effects budget was lean from the start, and was trimmed even further when Steven Paul went two weeks over schedule on the live-action shooting.

Brothers Bob and Dennis Skotak, veterans of a number of New World Pictures productions are accustomed to working miracles on a shoestring. They have been responsible for much of the front projection and matte work that will be seen in *SLAPSTICK*. "This whole show," said Bob Skotak, "has forced us to invent something new

every day, some new way of approaching a problem that will save a few dollars and still look good."

Dennis Skotak added, "There isn't the luxury of letting a problem go 'one more day.' We have to make the best possible use of our time. We cut corners wherever we can without sacrificing quality. We have no matte stands, and we've been doing matte paintings on corrugated cardboard. Ideally, we could be doing front projection shots in VistaVision, but the budget being what it was, we had to fudge a little and paste things together. We've compromised on the number of shots, rather than on their quality."

SLAPSTICK has been, to say the least, an ambitious project. A lot has been attempted on very little money. In fact it is a film filled with contrasts. Thematically, it deals with ugliness and beauty, stupidity and genius, loneliness and love. It aspires to artfulness, and yet will offer low comedy. The contrasts continue within the production itself. A youthful director guides a veteran cast; young artists and technicians create fresh variations of familiar visual effects.

If the film doesn't have a lot of money behind it, it makes up the lack in the tremendous enthusiasm shown by the people who have put it together. Paul described how he suspended shooting the day Kurt Vonnegut visited the set. "We just stopped," he said. "At first Kurt stayed in the corner, but I brought him out, introduced him to everyone. He talked and had a good time. It was a big thrill for me to observe as he and Jerry Lewis stood together. I was just speechless. What could I have said? It was like a dream come true." □



Makeup supervisor Robert Zraick's original design sketches for the makeup of the oversized twins Eliza (top) and Wilbur. Before Madeline Kahn was hired Jerry Lewis was to play both roles.

Marty Feldman as a sinister butler, Madeline Kahn and Jerry Lewis as the twins' parents and John Abbott as Dr. Frankenstein.



COMING

THE TWILIGHT ZONE

The air disaster tragically took three lives, but the show will go on.

By Cory Glaberson

"The fireballs were much stronger than anyone anticipated. We knew we were too close to it. Then a third blast blew off the entire tail section [of the helicopter] and we dropped straight down and crash-landed. It was like part of a movie. Everything was just all wrong."

It was one of those terrible, unexpected accidents that quickly and casually tears up the lives of the people around it and then suddenly stops, leaving the stunned survivors to pick up the pieces. For Vic Morrow and two child actors it was the end. While shooting a segment of THE TWILIGHT ZONE film, shrapnel from stunt explosions threw a Huey helicopter out of control and crashing down on top of the actors. They were killed instantly, caught beneath the spinning rotor blades.

For director John Landis, it was a nightmare. The accident happened right before his eyes while he was directing the scene from the ground (and not from in the helicopter before it crashed as some reports have stated). Reportedly, he ran over to the bodies of Morrow and the children and stood staring at the corpses, utterly devastated by the carnage. One child's mother kept screaming over and over, "You murdered my baby! You murdered my baby!" The deaths have kept Landis on the edge of hysteria and under a cloud of possible criminal charges. Landis was kept sequestered for several days, and remained in seclusion for weeks, appearing only at Morrow's funeral.

For assistant camera operator Randall Robinson, who told his vivid first hand account of the July 23 crash (quoted above) to *Variety*, it must have produced a terrible sense of *deja vu*. Just three months earlier, he witnessed three people killed in another helicopter crash during the filming of *BIRDS OF PREY 2*.

According to *Variety*, director John Landis, associate producer George Folsey Jr., unit production manager Dan Allingham and Warner Bros Inc. were each fined \$5,000 in civil penalties by State Labor Commissioner Patrick W. Henning. The \$5,000 fines, the maximum allowed under the law, were issued because of the unusual circumstances surrounding the deaths of the two Oriental children, Renee Shinn Chen, 6 and Myca Dinh Lee, 7.

Commissioner Henning characterized the deaths as "the direct result of neglect on the part of those responsible for the protection of the children," and said that the tragedy



Director John Landis

"would never have occurred if the child labor laws of the state had been followed." He also indicated that more serious criminal charges could be forthcoming and other individuals connected with the film could be brought up on charges.

The California State Labor Code has strict guidelines that govern the use of child actors. The filming exposed the children to an extremely dangerous situation near explosives and kept them working long after 6:30 pm without a permit, both violations of the State Code.

Meanwhile, all of Hollywood mourned the death of Vic Morrow, 50, who had starred in scores of television shows and movies. He was best known for his starring role as Army Sgt. Chip Saunders in the highly acclaimed ABC-TV series, *COMBAT*. Among his screen credits were *MESSAGE FROM SPACE*, *HUMAN-OIDS FROM THE DEEP*, and a recent Italian production, 1990: *THE BRONX WARRIORS*.

The furor over the deaths, however, has not stopped THE TWILIGHT ZONE movie. While there has been no official announcement, indications are that production will continue on the Warner Bros feature. However, it is expected that the film's completion and release dates will be pushed back considerably.

THE TWILIGHT ZONE film was designed as a four part film with a prologue and epilogue binding the stories together. Each of the different episodes is to be done by different directors working with different crews. John Landis and Steven Spielberg are jointly producing the film and directing one episode each. George Miller and Joe Dante are slated to direct the other two segments.

Filming of the first episode, which Landis had written as well as directed, was essentially complete at the time of the accident. The tragic helicopter crash happened on the last day of filming. Morrow played a bigoted involuntary time traveler forced to come to the aid of people he would normally despise. Landis also directed, before work on his main episode began, a wraparound prologue/epilogue for THE TWILIGHT ZONE. Starring Dan Ackroyd and Albert Brooks, the segment evolved from a short film project Landis had long wanted to direct entitled *REAL SCARY*.

When production resumes, supposedly sometime in September, director Joe Dante will be next to lens his segment. It's one of two segments reinterpreting old TV episodes. Dante's is from the Jerome Bixby story "It's a Good Life" about a near omnipotent six-year-old who exercises a terrible control over one rural community. Rob Bottin has been hired to create the special effects. The other reworked episode is based on Richard Matheson's "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet" with George Miller slated to direct. In the original teleplay, William Shatner played an airline passenger who sees a gremlin on the wing of the airplane, but cannot convince the other passengers and crew that the deadly spirit exists.

Spielberg's episode was to be a Matheson script of an original Spielberg story, though Spielberg hasn't exactly decided on which of any number of scripts and stories to shoot. Immediately after his THE TWILIGHT ZONE segment wraps, Spielberg is expected to leave for the start of production on *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK II*. Spielberg is leaving so quickly to go into *RAIDERS II*, that he might not be able to edit his own segment much less supervise the entire postproduction. This tight schedule has led many insiders to believe that THE TWILIGHT ZONE won't be completed until the summer of 1983.

Casting and other production arrangements on the remaining segments has scarcely begun. Earlier plans had called for a number of surprise cameo appearances, including one by the late Rod Serling. Apparently there is a piece of tape with Serling narrating an episode of the TV series that never aired. Fortunately, Serling's speech is vague enough to apply to the movie. However, it looks like Warner Bros intends to hold the line on one aspect of the production: the unusually tight budget, said to be in the vicinity of \$7 million for the entire film. □

THE DAY AFTER: DOOMSDAY ON TV

Casting is underway for THE DAY AFTER, an ABC Circle Films TV movie about a nuclear attack, to be directed by Nicholas Meyer (STAR TREK II, TIME AFTER TIME) and starring Jason Robards. The 4-hour telefilm, set in Kansas City, has been written by Ed Hume. The film is expected to enter production in late August or early September using locations in Kansas City and L.A. Stu Samuels, vice president of the network's TV movies and miniseries division, declined to reveal the film's budget, but stated, "It will be an expensive television movie."

Both Samuels and ABC Motion Pictures president Brandon Stoddard were unexpectedly grilled by TV critics after a showing of the film's promotional reel. The preview, an effective montage of THE DAY AFTER's gruesome storyboards, depicted victims of the attack disintegrating under its fiery impact.

The critics were suspicious that the movie would merely exploit current panic over the nuclear arms buildup, and, in typical network tradition, avoid taking a stand. "We are not a news division," said Samuels in response. "We do not have the franchise to editorialize. This is not a docu-drama, because, Thank God, it hasn't happened. It is a filmmaker's perspective of what might happen."

ABC president Stoddard agreed. "I don't think the audience will be able to find a political statement," he said. "It does not say there should be less nuclear bombs or more nuclear bombs. We do not deal in great detail with the causes."

Indeed, the film does not even reveal which superpower fired the first shot. The film's chronology begins two days before the bomb hits and concludes three weeks later. Kansas City is seen as a microcosm of "Middle America," and the film essentially is a story of survival.

Critics also questioned how gory THE DAY AFTER would be. "We're going to push the line as far as possible," said Samuels. "We're worried about viewers turning it off because they can't take it. We want to be as graphic as good taste will allow."

Bill Kelley

NATIONAL LAMPOON'S CLASS REUNION

It's an unsubtle spoof of stalk-and-slash movies designed to put some mirth into the mayhem.

By David J. Hogan

Anyone who has endured the peculiar horrors of a high school reunion will probably relate to NATIONAL LAMPOON'S CLASS REUNION, an ABC Motion Pictures production set for November theatrical release by 20th Century-Fox. Directed by Michael Miller and produced by Matty Simmons, the \$6 million film concerns the comedic terrors that befall the 1972 class of Lizzie Borden High School ("A Cut Above the Rest") when a psychotic former classmate escapes from a mental institution on the occasion of the class' 10-year reunion.

The broad spoofery of John Hughes' script takes shots at demonic possession, stalk-and-slash movies, and the sexual mores of the under-30 set. An exaggerated cross-section of the typical high school types (the wimp, the flunkout, the bitch, *ad absurdum*) is played by an ensemble cast featuring Gerrit Graham, Jacklyn Zeman, Shelly Smith (as Meredith Modess, TV pantyhose shill), Stephen Furst, Fred McCarren (THE BOOGENS), and Blackie Dammett as the psychotic villain.

CLASS REUNION was a new sort of challenge for director Michael Miller, who apprenticed at Roger Corman's New World Pictures after experience as a theatrical director in San Francisco and Chicago. His 1976 thriller JACKSON COUNTY JAIL won critical acclaim, and SILENT RAGE, a lively spoof of HALLOWEEN and the Frankenstein legend, opened earlier this year.

Miller is a chatty, pleasant man whose casual manner belies a rather intellectual interest in theater tradition. "You have to be careful about tone," said Miller about CLASS REUNION. "I looked at it like an Ionesco piece. You have to establish the limits of the absurdity going in. If you lose sight of that, you've got



Director Michael Miller shows Anne Ramsey how to be funny with a chainsaw.

something that's just ridiculous."

CLASS REUNION's villain spends a lot of time in a dress with a paper bag over his head, chasing former classmates with a chain saw. Not real subtle, but for Miller the *approach* is the key. "CLASS REUNION started out as a spoof of slasher movies," he said, "but I don't know if that's what we ended up with. I don't know if anyone's successfully combined comedy with true horror. The elements are similar because the best of each is unexpected, but it's such a difficult line to tread. I think the picture will be more like some of the Abbott and Costello films—just a lot of fun."

Miller directed the improvisational comedy troupe Second City while in Chicago, but admits that human-interest drama is the sort of film project that appeals to him most. Nonetheless, he found his experience on CLASS REUNION a satisfying one.

"I was exposed to a lot of expertise," he said. "I worked with youngsters at Corman's, and it's been nice to do a picture with a bigger budget, where I could meet older people." Miller worked with cinematographer Phil Lathrop (THEY SHOOT HORSES DON'T THEY?, HAMMETT), and veteran makeup artist Del Armstrong.

Armstrong's most challenging assignment on the film was to transform actress Joyce Gittlin into Anna Marie Spaniel, an unfortunate girl who metamorphoses into a fuzzy poodle at inopportune moments. "Del is great," said Miller. "His credits go back to THE WIZARD OF OZ. He spent five hours for us on a single

poodle transformation. We have some pretty good mechanical effects, too, like false heads and fire gags. I'd never been exposed to any of that stuff before, so the picture was a real learning experience."

Miller claims also to have learned a great deal about simple moviemaking logistics. "I can hear Roger Corman whispering in my ear every day," he said. "Roger taught me a lot about how to keep moving, how to use daylight, how to get setups done. But I'd never handled a cast as enormous as CLASS REUNION's. We had a shot where 125 people on one side of the room are talking to one person on the other side. It's enormously difficult to get that many people to look natural in a static shot."

Makeup artist Del Armstrong prepares a mockup of Zane Buzby as a tubercular Lizzie Borden High School student who has sold her soul to the devil (inset).



CLASS REUNION also marked a departure for production designer Dean Mitzner, whose credits include LOOKER, 1911 and TRON. Much of CLASS REUNION's 40-day shooting schedule was spent outside Hollywood at the Pasadena College of Chiropractic, an imposing building that Mitzner and staff cleverly "dressed down" for its guise as Lizzie Borden High, supposedly deserted since 1972.

"It was so much fun," said Mitzner. "It allowed me to get away from the glossy slickness of previous pictures I've worked on." About 600' of corridor was "aged" and dressed with cobwebs, stained masonry, even gargoyles. The college's front entrance and walls on either side were also aged, so convincingly that school officials erected a sign that said, "We Are Not Closed."

Advance footage from CLASS REUNION suggests that the finished picture will be giddy, unsubtle fun. Especially amusing is actress Zane Buzby as Delores Salk, a misanthropic polio victim who has sold her soul to the devil in return for perfect health.

Interestingly, director Miller is not a fan of low-brow comedy. "I'm tired of all the screaming and farting we've been getting," he said. "It would be nice to see more drawing room comedy or the sort of stuff Preston Struges did. We need more wit instead of jokes." Miller's comments are especially provocative in light of his next probable project, ANIMAL HOUSE II. For awhile, at least, the director's wit may have to take a backseat to moneymaking mayhem. □



Anna Marie Spaniel (Joyce Gittlin).



BOXOFFICE SURVEY: HOT SUMMER FILMS GIVE GENRE 37.8% OF BUSINESS

An analysis of the 50 Top Grossing Films as reported weekly by *Variety*, reveals that in the first half of 1982 (26 weeks through 6/2), revenue from horror, fantasy and science fiction films has increased 20.2% over last year while film grosses in general have increased 24.4%. The gain in revenue is accounted for by films released in the second quarter (the last 13 weeks), more than making up for the dismal boxoffice showing of the year's first quarter (see 12:4:12). The genre's percentage of total revenues, 37.8%, is running only 1.3% below the 39.1% share of boxoffice receipts genre films claimed in the first half of last year.

Of the 251 films that comprised

the weekly listings, 83 or 33% were genre titles. There were 23 science fiction films accounting for 9.2% of the total, but 14.5% of the boxoffice receipts; 18 fantasy films, 7.2% of the total and 11.5% of the receipts; and 42 horror films, 16.7% of the total, but only 11.8% of the receipts.

While the number of science fiction releases remained the same as last year, revenues rose a dramatic 71.8%. Revenues for horror films rose 24%, but the number of films increased only 7.7%. Meanwhile, the bottom seems to be dropping out of the fantasy sub-genre which has accounted for 25% fewer titles in release this year though boxoffice revenue has fallen only 15.2%.

Top-grossing genre films in the

Variety totals are listed at right. For purposes of breakdown by genre, titles are indicated as horror (h), fantasy (f) and science fiction (sf), followed by the number of weeks each title made it into the Top 50 listings since January 1. The totals do not include boxoffice figures from the previous year for films released in 1981. The dollar amounts listed represent only a small, scientific sample of a film's total earnings (about one-fourth of a film's actual worldwide rentals).

After only seven weeks in release, E.T.'s boxoffice receipts have out-grossed its nearest competitors by 2-to-1 and alone accounted for 26.1% of the genre total and 10.1% of the total revenues for the year.

TOP GENRE FILMS OF '82

E.T. THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL (sf, 7)	\$39,750,720
STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN (sf, 8)	\$18,005,917
POLTERGEIST (h, 8)	\$17,848,063
ANNIE (f, 10)	\$10,603,492
CONAN THE BARBARIAN (f, 9)	\$9,709,400
FIREFOX (sf, 6)	\$9,661,784
RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK (f, 30)	\$8,102,526
DEATHTRAP (h, 11)	\$7,169,808
QUEST FOR FIRE (sf, 19)	\$7,044,267
BLADE RUNNER (sf, 5)	\$7,027,839
DEAD MEN DON'T WEAR PLAID (f, 8)	\$5,564,194
TRON (sf, 3)	\$4,578,139
SWORD AND THE SORCERER (f, 12)	\$4,036,099
CAT PEOPLE (h, 9)	\$3,544,613
MODERN PROBLEMS (sf, 7)	\$3,503,785

COMING SOON

From the vaults of Universal comes a tribute to the monster films of yesteryear

By Jordan R. Fox

"We got everybody," said director John Landis. "All the great horror actors, the Wolf Man, every mummy that ever was. We're cutting our way through a parade of Frankenstein monsters: Karloff, Lugosi, Glenn Strange—even Kiwi Kingston. This is going to be orgasmic for horror fans!"

Landis is describing a film project guaranteed to be dear to all fans of *cinéfantastique*. COMING SOON is a compilation of horror and fantasy movie trailers (2½ minute or longer previews for upcoming films shown in theaters before the main feature) from the past 50 years.

The film is the brainchild of Mick Garris, special projects director at Universal. Naturally, Universal's trailer department head, Rob Idells, was asked to aid the film, but Garris also secured the participation of director (and noted monster-movie fan) John Landis. "I think Mick got in a bit over his head because it's such a terrific idea," said Landis. "Everyone likes trailers. And when you think about it, it's remarkable how many of them belong to M.C.A. [the parent corporation of Universal studios]."

Funded by Universal Home Video, Garris began scripting the narration (delivered on-camera and off by former scream-queen Jamie Lee Curtis), while program co-producer Idells set the research and trailer-hunting into motion. Landis made himself available for advice, direc-



Jamie Lee Curtis hosts the show from various standing sets at Universal.

tion of Curtis' segments at familiar landmarks on the Universal backlot, and close supervision of the show's editing.

The biggest initial problem was just finding the trailers. "We cleaned out the New Jersey Salt Mines [site of the main Universal films vaults]," said Idells. "A lot of stuff, like the 1933 INVISIBLE MAN trailer, just doesn't exist anymore." Much irreplaceable nitrate material had been lost, salvaged for its silver content, or turned to gooey sludge. Other film materials, deposited at the Library of Congress for copyright purposes, were consumed in a serious fire there several years ago.

While some rare nitrate negative material was saved, via new prints and transfer to a tape master, it also became necessary to utilize some unusual sources for material, such as television, re-release and alternate work-print versions of trailers and 16mm dupes courtesy of private collectors.

After the great mass of trailers were

collected, Landis, Garris and Idells had the laborious job of searching through them for the best material. The selection criteria was born partly from circumstance and partly from the creativity of those involved. "It has to be horror and fantasy, entertaining, and from Universal," said Landis. "If we like it, it's in. But first, it has to be for free." The "for free" restriction meant no post-1960 material involving actors (which would require the payment of residuals) could be used. On the other hand, M.C.A. controls the old Paramount library, including such titles as ISLAND OF LOST SOULS.

Other highlights of COMING SOON will include the seldom-seen, eight minute trailer for PSYCHO, in which Hitchcock conducts a tour of the Bates house and motel—in his usual deadpan manner. Not all the trailers selected for use are of such high standards. But it is often the trailers of truly wretched movies that, in their indescribable cheesiness, prove to be the most endearing. Two of

these, presented in COMING SOON, are CURUCU, BEAST OF THE AMAZON and KING KONG VS. GODZILLA. "Even the absolute worst movies have to have a minute or two that's usable for trailer purposes," said Idells.

Soon, however, the compilers of the film found that the plans for a 90 minute feature wouldn't work. "It just got to be exhausting," said Garris. "Like with a feature-length program of animated shorts, you get real tired of them after awhile." Landis agreed, "We were forced into being extremely selective, using only the best trailers and the best moments from trailers. We're going for more of a montage."

COMING SOON marked Landis' first experience with computerized editing on videotape. Over several half-day long sessions, subsisting on nothing but pretzels and Diet Pepsi, perfectionist Landis and his long-suffering tape editor endlessly juxtaposed segments, deleted or replaced those that didn't seem to work, and fussed over the editorial fine-tuning. Garris and Idells, working over Landis' shoulder, also contributed their ideas to the editing. The time-saving represented over cutting film was dramatic, but the whole process added up to a lot more work than Garris or Landis had envisioned.

A compact 55 minutes in its final form, COMING SOON will probably be available by late Fall on videocassette—the first tier of distribution. Then M.C.A. hopes to sell it to pay-TV and maybe even to syndicated commercial television. But Universal Home Video wasn't the only branch of M.C.A. pleased with the way the show turned out. The new Universal Classics division was encouraged to create new prints of 200 old films (including many classic genre titles) for specialized theatrical use. And it is anticipated that COMING SOON may receive some additional exposure among such releases, restoring the vanished tradition of the theatrical "short." □

REVENGE OF THE JEDI

Executive producer Howard Kazanjian puts in a convention appearance, but keeps the plot "hush, hush."

By David Moore

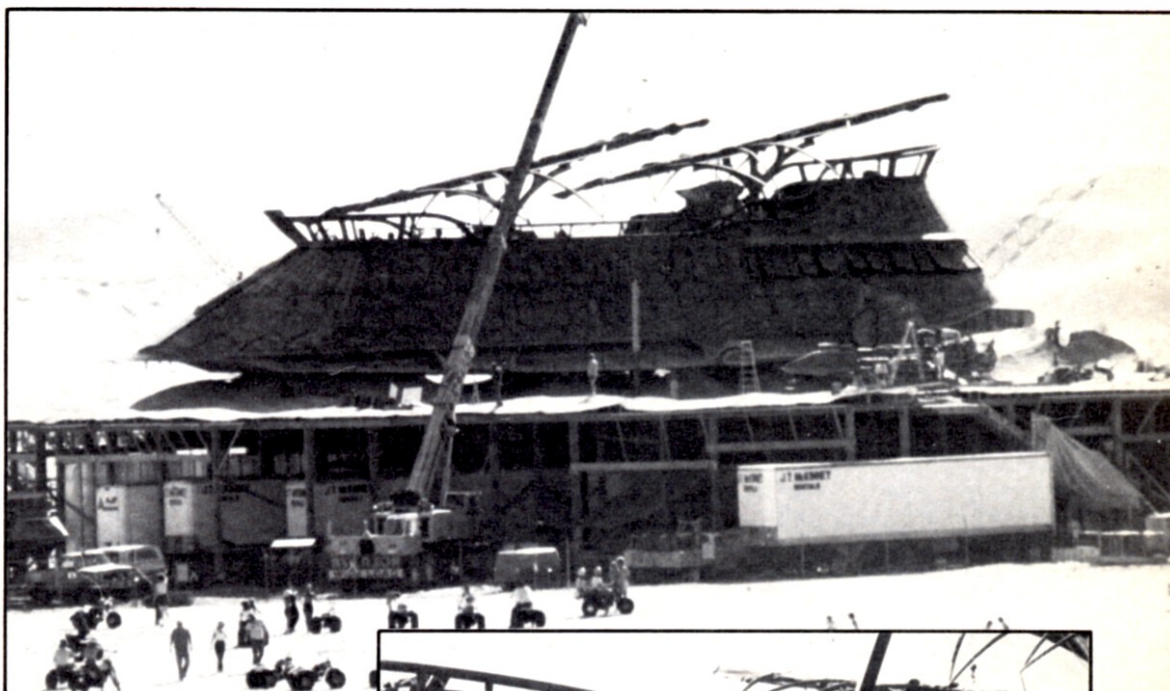
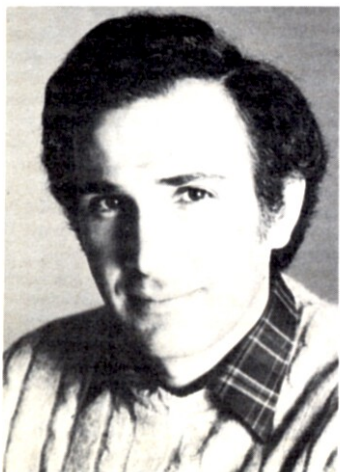
In 1976, the San Diego Comicon presented the first public preview of STAR WARS and on July 10, 1982, they repeated that "first" when Howard Kazanjian, the producer of REVENGE OF THE JEDI, narrated a slide presentation on the third film in the STAR WARS series.

Although Kazanjian was careful not to reveal the plot of the \$32 million film, there were several tantalizing glimpses of lavish and imaginative visuals, including an Imperial set, supposedly representing a gathering of 2,000 Imperial officers and Storm Troopers, which Kazanjian compared to the celebration scenes at the end of STAR WARS. He further teased the audience by showing Luke once more battling Darth Vader and then showing him captured by Vader and restrained with binders.

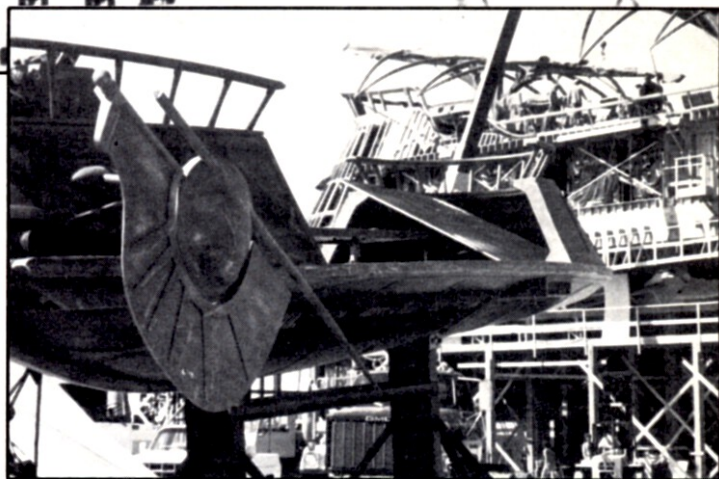
Some excellent shots of the Sand Barge in the Yuma, Arizona desert were displayed, but the most impressive exteriors were from the redwood forest in Crescent City, California, where secret filming took place at the end of May. The locale looked like something out of Flash Gordon's forest kingdom, Arboria, as drawn by Alex Raymond. The fairy tale atmosphere is shattered, however, by the intrusion of the Empire, primarily in the form of a full-scale Imperial two-legged walker (a version of which is glimpsed briefly in THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK).

The full-scale walker is 24 feet tall, and features cameos by Kazanjian and REVENGE OF THE JEDI's

Howard Kazanjian



Filming in the desert outside Yuma, Arizona, Lucasfilm constructed the set of a giant Sand Barge piloted by Jabba the Hut (top). Built on a plot 200 feet square, the barge was 82 feet high and 145 feet long. Smaller skiffs (inset) were 30 feet in length and constructed out from the barge for battle scenes.



director, Richard Marquand, as the mechanical giant's pilots.

All of the principal actors are back for REVENGE OF THE JEDI, including Alec Guinness as Ben Kenobi. Though Kazanjian insisted that Kenobi returns only as a "ghost," the manner in which Guinness filmed his scenes on the reconstructed sets of Dagobah suggest that he may return in the flesh. Guinness' ghostly appearance in the last film required no on-set work, only filming in front of a blue screen.

New characters in REVENGE OF THE JEDI include the never-before-seen Jabba the Hut (the owner of the Sand Barge where a lot of the action takes place), an alien named Admiral Ak-Bar, as well as a creature called the Pig Guard which is the virtual image of one of the witch's troll castle guards from SLEEPING BEAUTY.

Although the technical side of moviemaking isn't usually explored in these presentations, Kazanjian revealed that, due to research undertaken by Lucasfilm, REVENGE OF THE JEDI did not use Panavision equipment, but employed Arriflex cameras and lenses instead. He explained the final result would be sharper and more satisfying.

On the subject of the much ballyhooed, and quickly discredited, BLUE HARVEST title alias for the Yuma, Arizona shooting, Kazanjian explained that although it was partly adopted to deflect publicity and the possibility of being overrun by fans, it was also created to keep down costs when dealing with businesses in the

area.

Jabba's Sand Barge, constructed and filmed there, was the largest set ever built in Yuma. Quipped Kazanjian, "I think it's the largest thing in Yuma."

Among other pieces of new hardware unveiled for the film was a Speeder Bike. Although some were seen parked off in a corner of the Yuma set, Kazanjian showed them in use for the forest sequence with Luke and Leia riding double on one. In the film, they're capable of speeds up to 200 mph.

Other minor plot elements were also exposed, including Luke's building of a new light sabre to replace the one lost (along with his hand) at the end of THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK.

Oddly enough, the audience at the convention doubted that Darth Vader is really Luke's father, as if the biggest surprise in THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK is a trick. Some fans even have wagers riding on it. Lucasfilm has repeatedly stated that Vader is Luke's father, and that anyone at all familiar with the films of George Lucas would realize that a plot element of that magnitude would not turn out to be

just a cheap trick.

One point not mentioned amid the fans booing rumors that Han Solo dies ("So that Indiana Jones can live," as one member of the audience put it), was an interview with Harrison Ford on the TODAY show in which he said REVENGE OF THE JEDI would be the last time he'd play Han Solo. Lucasfilm no doubt wishes to play this down, lest they become the target of the same kind of annoying fan response that Paramount endured because of STAR TREK II.

Kazanjian took the occasion of the convention to announce that the release date for REVENGE OF THE JEDI would change from May 27 to May 25, 1983 (six years to the day after STAR WARS was released), and that the film had one more day of location filming left to do "somewhere in the U.S."

A trailer for REVENGE OF THE JEDI will run with STAR WARS during its August re-release, and actual film footage (as opposed to slides) will be shown over the Labor Day weekend at the 1982 World Science Fiction Convention in Chicago. □

THE HOUSE

Three old masters of the macabre reunite for an old-fashioned, tasteful whodunit.

By Bill Kelley

Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing and Vincent Price have been reunited, for the first time since 1970's *SCREAM AND SCREAM AGAIN*. The film is an adaptation of Earl Derr Biggers' *Seven Keys to Baldpate*, a gothic mystery which Cannon Films began shooting on English locations in August. Derr Biggers wrote the Charlie Chan mysteries. John Carradine also stars in the film, directed by Pete Walker from a screenplay by Michael Armstrong (*MARK OF THE DEVIL*).

Tentatively titled *THE HOUSE OF THE LONG SHADOWS*, the film deals with a series of murders during a family reunion at Baldpate Manor, a fictitious estate in Wales. "It's a contemporary mystery with elements of Agatha Christie and *THE OLD DARK HOUSE*," said Lee, after reading Armstrong's treatment. "It is not, in any sense, a horror film, and I have told the producers I am not interested in doing a horror film. There is some violence—you can't very well make a murder mystery without someone getting killed—but there's no graphic mutilations or any of that nonsense. And there is a lot of comedy—not slapstick, but natural humor."

Lee said the supporting characters include two young couples and a young American author who doesn't believe in the supernatural, and apparently is there to debunk the house's reputation.

"It's basically a reunion in an ancestral home of the various members of a family," Lee said. "I buy the house, thinking it's empty, and then I turn up and want to know who the hell these people are—because this house belongs to me. And it all takes off from there."

Lee repeatedly refers to the project as a whodunit and he has cautioned Cannon Films to change the film's title so it would not be confused with *THE HOUSE OF DARK SHADOWS*, made about 10 years ago. "Perhaps they could just shorten it to *THE HOUSE*," said Lee. "That's a pretty good line."

With such a notable cast it's a sure bet that whatever the producers or actors call it, the critics will label the film a horror movie. "Look, if people want to think of it as a horror film, let them," said Lee. "There are some members of the press and public who are bound to think of it that way. If people insist on calling it a horror film, perhaps it's time we showed them a thriller with style and taste, without an ax sticking out of someone's face every 10 minutes." □

THE SCORE / Two from Jerry Goldsmith

By Randall D. Larson

Jerry Goldsmith's credits include superior work in nearly every film genre. Goldsmith has been equally distinguished at scoring westerns (*HOUR OF THE GUN*), war films (*PATTON*), dramas (*LILLIES OF THE FIELD*), adventures (*THE WIND AND THE LION*), and comedies (*THE TROUBLE WITH ANGELS*).

In addition, Goldsmith has earned a reputation among devotees of *cinefantastique* for being particularly adept at providing musical coloration for science fiction and fantasy films. Goldsmith scored the *PLANET OF THE APES*, *THE OTHER, MAGIC*, some of the best episodes of TV's *TWILIGHT ZONE*, *STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE*, *LOGAN'S RUN*, and *ALIEN*. In 1976, Goldsmith won an Oscar for his eerie music from *THE OMEN*.

Goldsmith's most recent film scores include two outstanding examples of fantastic film music: Steven Spielberg's *POLTERGEIST* and the animated fantasy, *THE SECRET OF NIMH*.

POLTERGEIST was Goldsmith's first film for Spielberg. "He's very articulate about music," Goldsmith said. "With Spielberg, probably more than any other director, there's a tremendous amount of discussion." As the elaborate special effects for *POLTERGEIST* had not been completed while Goldsmith was writing, he depended upon Spielberg's detailed descriptions of the visual elements to create complementary music.

Often, the realization of the effects, or their duration on screen, would change once they were finished, necessitating last-minute changes in the music. "It was much later, after the music had been recorded, that the special effects came in," said Goldsmith. "The sequence where the Victorian ghost descends the stairs was originally blocked to be twice as long, but the effects only filled half the slot." By this time it was too late for Goldsmith to re-orchestrate the music to fit the new timing, so it had to be cut manually.

Goldsmith's music for *POLTERGEIST* is diverse, its primary theme being a simple childlike lullaby which is effectively blended with other themes that range from the atonal to the impressionistic. "Its diverse styles seem to mesh together very well," he said.

Goldsmith described his musical approach to the film as being a joint effort between he and Spielberg. "Anything I did was not on my own volition. We both worked



Jerry Goldsmith

on the music. We wanted a child-like theme for the little girl. Spielberg felt that much of the action in the closet should have a quasi-religious atmosphere to it. There was something definitely non-human about it, yet it was not evil all the way. It was discussing specifics like that which resulted in our approach."

It took Goldsmith 15 weeks to write the score for *POLTERGEIST*, composing on a nine line sketch with notations for all the instruments. He then turned the score over to his orchestrator, Arthur Morton, who transferred it to an orchestral score for each of the instruments. The music was recorded by an 80-piece orchestra accompanied by a chorus of 60.

After completing the spooky and haunting strains for Spielberg's ghost film, Goldsmith spent another 15 weeks writing the music for *THE SECRET OF NIMH*, a charming and exotic animated fantasy. Goldsmith was particularly pleased to work on the film, never having scored an animated cartoon previously. In many ways though, the composer approached the film the same way he scored *POLTERGEIST*, using diverse themes strung together into a cohesive whole. Animation, however, presented a whole new range of difficulties.

"In animation, the length of scenes are much shorter than in live action," Goldsmith said. "Action can't take as long, so it's more difficult to get a flowing line in the music. However, one can be broader, dramatically, because of the fact that it is all abstract. There are really only three elements in animation: there's the visual, the dialog, and the sound. Of the abstract sound, the music is the dominant force."

In addition to adjusting to the faster cutting of animation, Goldsmith was also required to compose to sequences that were unfin-

ished, visually. "About 50 percent of the picture was invisible to me when I was writing," he said. "It was either just pencil drawings or ink sketches. I never saw the coloration until we had an answer print. To see it come to life all of a sudden was emotionally incredible!"

While both *THE SECRET OF NIMH* and *POLTERGEIST* necessitated Goldsmith's scoring to unfinished visuals, the animated picture didn't have the drastic changes in timing that the special effects film did. "In animation, the footage is not going to change," he said. "You have drawings and you know approximately the length. In *POLTERGEIST* you never knew."

Goldsmith did not score *THE SECRET OF NIMH* in the manner of a cartoon. "I told the producers that if they wanted a Disney-like, synchronize-every-cut type of score that I couldn't do it," he said. "I wanted to score it as I would live action." True to his intentions, Goldsmith's music for the film is complex, incorporating no less than eight different leitmotifs, or themes, for specific characters and locations.

"The themes go from pure romantic to impressionism," said Goldsmith. "It's sort of an animated *Peter and the Wolf*. It's a much more conservative score than, say, *THE OMEN* or *OUTLAND* or *ALIEN* or even *POLTERGEIST*, but it's still diversely styled, musically, although it all seems to hang together cohesively." As with *POLTERGEIST*, Goldsmith used an orchestra of 80 pieces to record his work.

Goldsmith also worked with lyricist Paul Williams on the two songs used in the film. Normally, Goldsmith would have to begin song work early in the production, so the animators could follow his music. But in this picture it was a rush job. "We did a piano version of the end title, with the rhythm, and they animated that," he said. "For the lullaby sequence, I followed the animation."

While working for horror films has given the composer a noteworthy reputation among horror fans, Goldsmith says he has been trying to stay away from the genre lately, so as not to become typecast. He doesn't regard his two latest films as horror movies. "I don't consider *POLTERGEIST* a horror story—it's an old fashioned ghost story." As for *THE SECRET OF NIMH*: "The story wasn't horror," he said. "There's comedy romance, adventure—like an opera. I try to do new things, but basically I'm saying the same thing with a little twist on it." □

HALLOWEEN: SEASON OF THE WITCH

Minus Jamie Lee Curtis and "the Shape," Nigel Kneale's screenplay is a sequel in name only.

By Charlotte Wolter

Gone is the Shape, gone is Jamie Lee Curtis. First-time director Tommy Lee Wallace, production designer Peter Jamison and screenwriter Nigel Kneale have recast the entire thrust and feeling of the third HALLOWEEN movie and sent it off in a completely new direction.

HALLOWEEN III: THE SEASON OF THE WITCH, the latest entry in John Carpenter's Pumpkin Pie Enterprises series for Universal Pictures, is a rock-bottom \$2.5 million production (about as low-budget as a union production can get). Supposedly, Jamie Lee Curtis did not want to star in another HALLOWEEN film. Screenwriter Nigel Kneale happened to be in Los Angeles doing re-writes on the ill-fated CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON remake. With Curtis out of the picture, Carpenter approached Kneale about revamping the entire idea of the sequel.

Kneale is known for his ingenious, imaginative scripts of the "Quarter-mass" BBC science-fiction series, later turned into popular films including FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH and THE ENEMY FROM SPACE, as well as for his distinguished non-genre work.

Reportedly, after producers Debra Hill and Carpenter approached Kneale, he came back a mere three hours later and pitched the entire story verbally. They were immediately enthusiastic and asked Kneale to write a screenplay. He returned to London and finished the script in only three weeks.

The tale told in Kneale's script is



Halloween masks designed by a diabolical toymaker, and manufactured by Hollywood's Don Post Studios, serve as the focal point for the film.

both a suspenseful story of a struggle to outwit a bitter old man's fiendish plot against the children of the world as well as a satire on the destructive influence of the mass media, especially television.

Cochran (played by Dan O'Herlihy) is a noted toy and mask maker who creates gloriously horrific masks especially for Halloween. He sells millions of the masks by undercutting his competition and saturating the air waves with commercials. Each mask contains a hidden electronic chip and when Halloween night comes...well, producer Debra Hill won't reveal what the masks do or how (or if) Cochran's plot is foiled. She does think the script is a fine piece

of storytelling. "I see this film as more of a 'pod' movie than a 'knife' movie," she said.

As enthusiastic as Carpenter and director Wallace were about Kneale's script they made some major revisions. In Kneale's script the hero, Dr. Challis, is just swept along by events. Now he is more of a protagonist. The man who plays Dr. Challis, Tommy Atkins, commented on other changes. "I like the script better now," he said. "It was so British, it needed to be Americanized. And, I think Nigel has something against the Irish. His original screenplay made the Irish look so awful!"

Director Tommy Wallace indicated there were changes in the script

to fit the Carpenter formula of characterization through action. "You decide, for instance, that you can convey a piece of information by having a character *do* something instead of say something," he said.

Wallace has been a friend of Carpenter's since high school in Bowling Green, Kentucky, and was production designer on THE FOG, HALLOWEEN, and ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13. Directing his first feature taught him a lot about movie-making. "I'm learning a very adult thing called compromise," said Wallace. "Things can evolve that you would never have dreamed of up front. At first I wanted to shoot wide and expansive. But by re-writing my shot list to more realistic proportions and confining myself to smaller and smaller areas, the shadows closed in, the alleys got smaller and that's precisely what the audience should be feeling."

A key feature of the film are its special masks created by Don Post Studios, manufacturers of latex masks for both the film industry and private consumers. Don Post Studio's factory was so striking that it was written into the script as the location for Cochran's mask factory.

For the Halloween masks, Don Post Studios slightly altered two of their existing creations (a phosphorescent skull and a witch) and created an original pumpkin head mask, from input, of course, by the Pumpkin Pie staff. "We combined some of our own paint formulas with day-glo fluorescent pigments to create a very vibrant coloration in the final mask," said John Naulin, spokesman for Don Post Studios. "Hagatha the witch with that day-glo paint job is a terrific character, a grabber."

The Don Post Studios are marketing the masks to what they hope will be a large and enthusiastic audience. "We're selling them right out of the original molds," Naulin said. "Right off the same sculptures with everything identical to the film."

Abandoning a successful formula to make a more ambitious film may possibly point to Carpenter's and Hill's confidence in their ability to appeal to the current mood of their audience, or perhaps in their audience's loyalty to them. Hill, however, sees it more simply. "It's just that we've done this now three times, I'm interested in many other things." □

Technicians at the toy manufacturing plant insert complex microcircuitry into each mask as part of an evil plan.



Dan O'Herlihy plays Conal Cochran, a man with a grudge against children.



Challis (Tom Atkins) is captured by graysuits (Mike Green and Tim Lydell) and given a tour of the toymaker's high-tech lab.



HEH-HEH-HEH! GREETINGS KIDDIES! PREPARE YOURSELF FOR AN ACCOUNT OF **INCREDIBLE HORROR!** A TALE THAT'S **CHILLINGLY CREEPY!** A STORY OF THREE MEN WHO HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR MORE **THRILLS AND CHILLS** THAN A GRAVEYARD FULL OF **HUNGRY ZOMBIES!** NOW THEY'VE COMBINED THEIR **GHOULISH WITS** ON A **VERY SCARY MOVIE!** YOU'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING QUITE LIKE IT, KIDDIES, FOR THEY ARE THE...

MASTERS OF THE MACABRE

IN THE SMALL TOWN OF MONROEVILLE, JUST A HEARTBEAT AWAY FROM THE THRIVING METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH, THREE MEN ARE ON A **GRIM MISSION!** THEIR GOAL: TO SEND YOU OUT OF THE MOVIE THEATER WITH **JUJUBES AND POP-CORN** IN YOUR HAIR! THEIR TOOLS: **WALKING CORPSES, GIANT COCKROACHES** AND **MURDEROUS BEASTS!** THEIR VICTIM: **YOU!**



CREEPSHOW
JOLTING TALES OF HORROR!
LAYOUTS BY: JOLTIN' GEORGE ROMERO
WRITTEN BY: STUPIFYIN' STEPHEN KING
MONSTERS BY: TERRORIZIN' TOM SAVINI

DRAPER

CREEPSHOW

IT'S AN \$8 MILLION COMIC BOOK,
FROM GEORGE ROMERO & FRIENDS

When George Romero was 14 years old, he was arrested for throwing a flaming dummy off a Bronx rooftop. "But we're makin' a movie!" the young director of *THE MAN FROM THE METEOR* informed the officers.

The cops were unimpressed.

Romero might have offered a similar explanation last November, had a health official wandered into the Penn Hall Academy, a Pittsburgh grammar school being used as the headquarters for *CREEPSHOW*, where in the middle of the gym, tens of thousands of giant cockroaches were scurrying madly to and fro.

But no one would think of arresting Romero for staging such an atrocity. Folks are more impressed these days.

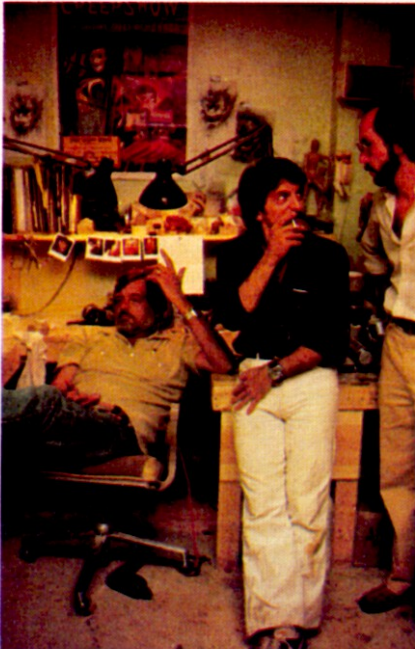
The gymnasium-turned-soundstage is a long way from the Bronx. And *CREEPSHOW*'s healthy \$8 million budget and big-name cast—including Hal Holbrook, E. G. Marshall, Adrienne Barbeau and Leslie Nielsen—is a far cry from *THE MAN FROM THE METEOR*. But Romero's style hasn't changed all that much, despite the success of his two horror classics, *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* (1968) and *DAWN OF THE DEAD* (1979). His films are still made with a maximum of directorial control, and a minimum of cash. His films are still made in Pittsburgh, his adopted home. And Romero's crew is still basically a group of neighborhood friends having fun together: no one watches the time clock, no studio chief peers over Romero's shoulder, and if a sound man pitches in to help a gaffer set up a light, no one screams about union violations.

Though *CREEPSHOW* isn't a typical Hollywood production, it's no home movie, either. For the film, due to be released this fall, Romero has teamed up

with two of the most celebrated names in modern horror: 34-year-old makeup artist Tom Savini, who almost single-handedly ushered in the era of "splatter movies" with his stomach-churning work on *FRIDAY THE 13TH* and *DAWN OF THE DEAD*; and best-selling author Stephen King, who in addition to writing the original screenplay (his first ever to be produced), stars in one of the film's five horror vignettes.

Horror anthologies have never been very successful, either artistically or commercially. But Romero isn't one to let tradition stand in his way. A maverick—

Director George Romero (l), makeup artist Tom Savini and producer Richard Rubinstein during a brainstorming session in Savini's workshop.



even among independent producers—Romero and partner Richard Rubinstein have carved a comfortable niche for their production company, Laurel Entertainment, Inc., by refusing to operate by Hollywood's rules, seeking alternatives to conventional routes for financing and distribution, and in the case of *DAWN OF THE DEAD*, thumbing their noses at the industry's ratings system.

"I think the studios are dinosaurs to some extent," said the 42-year-old Romero, who looks a little like a bearded, 6'4" teddy bear. "But they're still powerful enough to be around for a while. Very few pictures get made—fewer and fewer each year—and that causes a certain attitude on the part of the studios. They won't do anything small—they feel they have to shoot for the moon everytime out of the gate. Nobody's approaching this business sanely—as a business that you can run on small, but steady profits.

"It's scary when you consider that *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK*, *SUPERMAN II* and *STRIPES* made more than twice as much as *everything else* last year," Romero noted. "When you're with a studio, if it doesn't look like your film will hit the \$100 million mark, the romance wears off: they start pulling back on the campaign, how they book it and the number of screens. The industry operates on a set of standards that have nothing to do with making films or getting films seen, and it doesn't really serve the audience in any way. It serves the guys that are looking to make the \$100 million."

In contrast, Romero is content with making enough to keep more movies coming down the Laurel pipeline. "My concern is that the company stays alive to fight again," he said, "rather than trying to rape it all off one picture, which a lot of

ARTICLE BY PAUL R. GAGNE



Both the style and substance of *CREEPSHOW* are based on the lurid E.C. horror comics of the '50s. Left: The corpse of Nathan Grantham (John Amplas, in makeup by Tom Savini) rises from his grave in the film's opening segment, "Father's Day." Right: Ted Danson and Gaylen Ross are walking corpses, too, looking to avenge their death in "Something To Tide You Over." These scenes illustrate the saturated, "comic-book" lighting used extensively by Romero and cinematographer Michael Gornick.

people do. I'm not shooting for \$100 million. I just want to make movies."

Like many of his fellow directors, Romero began experimenting with filmmaking in his teens, while attending parochial school in The Bronx. Following in the footsteps of his father, a graphic artist, Romero enrolled in Pittsburgh's Carnegie-Mellon Institute studying painting and design. After three years, he transferred to the drama department. "But I decided that was too hard, too."

Eventually, Romero left school and returned to his teenage obsession: film. "A bunch of us got together, and an uncle of mine got us a camera, and we started to mess around and made a little film. We opened Latent Image in 1962 with two penlights and a Bolex!"

Soon, Latent Image grew into one of Pittsburgh's leading producers of TV commercials, with such clients as Calgon, Alcoa and U. S. Steel. After several unsuccessful attempts to fund feature projects, Romero and his partners decided on the most commercial venture possible—a horror film. *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* went into production in 1967, directed and co-written by Romero from a three-part short story he'd penned. It was filmed in black and white, in 35mm, whenever Latent Image's workload would allow, and took more than nine months of shooting to complete. Total cost: \$114,000. It was an auspicious debut, to say the least. "It's like Orson Welles making *CITIZEN KANE* his first time out of the box," said Richard Rubinstein, *CREEPSHOW*'s producer. "It's a tough act to follow."

While the film became an almost instant classic and earned sizeable rentals (more than \$10 million since its release), Romero was forced to take his distributor, the Walter Reade Organization, to court to try and collect his share. It wasn't the last time Romero would

have his fingers burned.

The success of the film prompted other investors to offer Romero enough money to make another horror film. While he had only covered the first part of the trilogy—an allegory concerning what happens when an incoming society replaces an existing one—Romero wasn't ready to move on to the next part just yet. "I didn't want to get typecast or to go right back out and do something similar," Romero said. "I didn't have a good idea for extending the story. I had the germ of an idea, because I had the trilogy, but we really wouldn't have had the money to make something like *DAWN OF THE DEAD*."

Instead, Romero tried his hand with light comedy (*THERE'S ALWAYS VANILLA*), the occult (*JACK'S WIFE*) and, more in spirit with his first feature, *THE CRAZIES*, a story of the contamination of a town's water supply by the military, and the attempts to keep the resulting wave of insanity contained. The films were low-budget efforts, financed by local investors. And they all died at the boxoffice, more often than not the result of mishandling, misinterpretation and mistreatment by distributors. *JACK'S WIFE*, for example, was a sensitive women's film, dealing with a suburban housewife who becomes involved with witchcraft. "[Distributor] Jack Harris radically cut the film and changed the title to *HUNGRY WIVES*," Romero said. "He tried to make it look like soft porn, which it's not."

It was clear that for Romero to succeed financially, as well as artistically, he'd have to become more adept in handling the financial end of the film business, or else find someone else who already was.

In 1973, struggling young director George Romero was interviewed by successful young financial whiz Richard Rubinstein, a graduate of the Columbia University business school and a consultant to a Wall Street brokerage on

the film industry. It was a match made in heaven.

"We started talking," recalled Rubinstein, "and we've been talking ever since. We had a sense that we didn't want each other's jobs, but we had synergistic talents that, when put together, could make more than each of us could do alone. He's 80 percent director and 20 percent a businessman. I'm 20 percent director and 80 percent business. That's enough overlap so that we talk the same language."

"These guys from Pittsburgh were rather naive in a lot of ways about the nature of the business," added Rubinstein. "Not untalented, and not lacking creativity, but the distribution mechanism is cumbersome and expensive, and if you're not set up to have a shield in front of you when you walk through that, it can be pretty rough."

Romero and Rubinstein teamed up to form the Laurel Group, specializing in commercials and sports documentaries. The work was highly visible and helped establish Laurel as a viable production company. In 1976, Romero re-entered feature filmmaking with *MARTIN*, a modern-day updating of the vampire legend. Filmed in 16mm for \$275,000, the film was a critical success, and although not that profitable, it was a good lead-in to *DAWN OF THE DEAD*.

Originally, Laurel was going to attempt a smaller film before tackling the long-awaited sequel to *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*. But the game plan changed when Italian director Dario Argento put up half of the \$1.5 million budget for *DAWN OF THE DEAD*. Rubinstein quickly raised the rest.

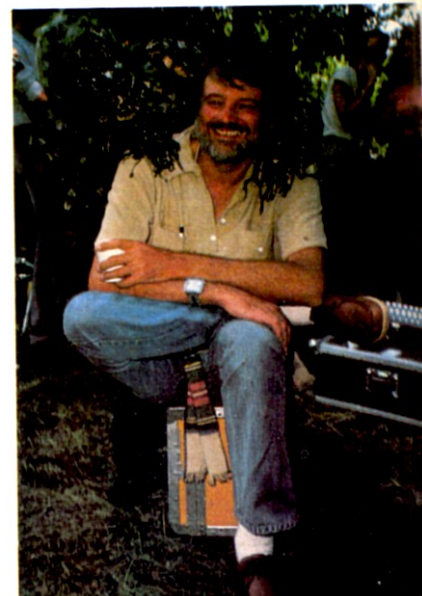
Shooting began in November, 1977, in a recently-completed shopping mall outside of Pittsburgh. The rest, as they say, is history. The film has grossed more than \$55 million worldwide, making it one of the most successful independent

features ever. And it did it without the benefit of an MPAA rating—its graphic violence would have certainly earned it an "X" and a probable quick death at the box office.

"A lot of theaters resist playing an unrated picture, some newspapers won't take ads, and you can't buy commercial time before 11 p.m.," Rubinstein noted. "But we felt that to cut the picture to get an 'R' rating, we'd destroy it. George and I were in perfect sync. I thought we'd make more money leaving it uncut, and he wanted to leave it uncut because it was his baby. We both got our satisfaction."

Finding a distributor willing to handle the film was tough. But United Film Distributing, a subsidiary of the United Artists Theater Circuit, agreed to take the risk. The film's overwhelming success led to the signing of a three picture deal with Laurel, including *KNIGHT-RIDERS* (1981); the upcoming *INVASION OF THE SPAGHETTI MONSTERS*, a 1950s outer space spoof; and the final part of

George Romero poses with "Dead Nate" between set-ups on "Father's Day." Romero and crew were unusually relaxed during filming, one bonus of working 2,000 miles from Hollywood.



Romero's zombie trilogy, *DAY OF THE DEAD*.

Although UFD also financed *CREEPSHOW*, the film will be distributed by Warner Bros, the first film of Romero's ever to be released by one of the "majors." It's a sure sign of Laurel's increased clout and growing sophistication in the art of deal making.

"Our company is not financed to produce films, it's financed to develop," Romero said. "We pay for a screenplay, do some graphics on it, talk to a cast, budget it—in essence, we get it ready to shoot. If we walk into a studio, all we need is an answer to one question: 'Here's the movie. We're going to shoot it in June. Do you want to get involved with it or not?' Once somebody says 'yes,' we already make a little bit of money; enough, in fact, to keep the company in existence for a couple of years. When the picture goes out, if it sells tickets, then that's gravy. But you have to find the bottom line. You can't wait for ticket sales."

Romero and Rubinstein have stubbornly refused to allow backers to control a film's creative aspects—the typical Hollywood situation. "You can only get creative freedom—and I equate creative freedom with good movies and good business—if, on one hand, you're the recipient of a \$10,000 grant from the American Film Institute, or if you're Coppola, Lucas or Spielberg," Rubinstein said. "Almost everyone else falls between those two, and they don't contractually have the final cut. We've been able to maintain those kinds of controls over what we do."

How can Romero and Rubinstein operate successfully outside the Hollywood mainstream? Being based in Pittsburgh may be one advantage—being physically isolated from the rest of the industry may make it easier to see things objectively. But more likely, it's the firm belief that Laurel could succeed, and on its own terms. "It's possible to negotiate your way through the system and make a good picture," Rubinstein said. "We've said 'no' when it was right to say no—even when we didn't have the rent money at the end of a particular month, and it would have been a great salvation to say 'yes' to a particular proposal."

But being the smallest kid on the block has its drawbacks, too, especially when it comes to getting bookings for a film—as Romero discovered with several of his earlier efforts. But Laurel is small enough to retrench, to wait until more favorable terms arise. They can afford to develop just one or two films at a time, or none at all. "We have the advantage of making a picture when we think it's a good picture to make," said Rubinstein.

By *not* looking to make a fortune every time out, Romero and Rubinstein hope to assure that Laurel

A George Romero Retrospective

Good times and bad with Pittsburgh's one-man film industry.

He has directed eight feature films, dozens of nationally-televised sports documentaries and hundreds of commercials and industrial films.

Yet George Romero is known only for his two horror classics, *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* and *DAWN OF THE DEAD*. His other features have received relatively little attention. Here, then, is a brief summary:

Night of the Living Dead (1968) was Romero's first feature. Made for \$114,000, it has since become one of the most successful cult/horror movies of all time [4:1:15].

There's Always Vanilla (1970) was an attempt at a romantic comedy like *THE GRADUATE*. Shot in 16mm, the film has hardly been seen. "When you're in Pittsburgh, you look at the other movies out there and you start thinking, 'I can do that,'" Romero said. "But there's a practical reality to this business."

Jack's Wife (1971), another 16mm project financed by local investors, was meant as a "women's picture," but the distributor re-cut the film and packaged it as soft porn, changing the title to *HUNGRY WIVES*. "But there wasn't any skin in the movie at all," Romero noted.

The Crazies (1972) dealt with a contaminated town and the government's violent attempts to "kill" the story [2:3:8]. "Lee Hessel [co-producer and distributor] thought he had the hottest thing since canned soup," Romero said. "Instead of releasing it wide, he decided to break it in two theaters in New York City. He threw everything he had into it, but nobody came out to see it."

Martin (1977), Romero's first film with producer Richard Rubinstein, was a study of vampirism, and the



Above: Romero (holding paint bucket) poses with cast and crew of *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*. Top Right: Filming Judith O'Dea's escape from the cemetery. Below Right: Cinematographer Mike Gornick (l), sound man Tony Buba and Romero in crew photo from *MARTIN*, Romero's first film with Richard Rubinstein.



relationship between magic and reality. Shot in 16mm for \$275,000, the film garnered more critical attention than boxoffice receipts.

Dawn of the Dead (1979) marked Romero's return to the zombie trilogy and to financial success [8:1:32]. Made for \$1.5 million, the film has grossed \$55 million worldwide. It also ushered in a new age of cinematic violence, and raised public awareness about the dangers of shopping malls.

Knightriders (1981) was a \$4 million, 146-minute gamble. A story of chivalry and Camelot set in modern times, producer Richard Rubinstein blames a poor ad campaign for the film's dismal performance. With the film shortened by 30 minutes, plans now call for a re-release and a new ad campaign.



Below Right: Romero watches intently as Tom Savini sets up an effect shot in the Monroeville shopping center where *DAWN OF THE DEAD* was filmed. Below left: Romero directs Ed Harris and Amy Ingersoll on the set of *KNIGHTRIDERS*. Note Romero's "lucky" plaid scarf, which he also wore during the filming of *CREEPSHOW*, but underneath his shirt.





Cinematographer Michael Gornick

will live to fight another day. "Even if our next six movies go down the tubes, we'd still be able to make six more movies," said Romero following the disappointing release of *KNIGHTRIDERS*.

Even with *CREEPSHOW*'s \$8 million budget, "we're still a hands-on organization, and I don't think we've lost sight of that," Rubinstein said. "It's grown in scope and size, but we've tried not to lose sight of those things that made it work when we were hungry. Not much has changed in terms of lifestyle."

"We've shed some of the responsibilities we've had to good talent, which has allowed George and myself to take a broader creative perspective," Rubinstein continued. "David Vogel, my associate producer, has assumed a lot of the specific responsibilities that I used to deal with. There's now an accounting department that writes the checks. We haven't let go of the reigns, but we don't necessarily saddle the horse anymore. But when it comes down to it, if there's nobody around to help pack up a cable, George will pack it up. It comes down to the fact that we're basically a hand-crafted picture-making organization."

George Romero's association with author Stephen King stretches back several years, when he was approached by Warner Bros about directing *SALEM'S LOT*, King's tale of vampires run amok in a small town in Maine. Romero, a fan of King's frightening, intensely visual novels, was immediately enthusiastic about the project, which was at that point slated for theatrical release.

"Everybody in the world did a script for *SALEM'S LOT*," noted Romero. "Sterling Silliphant, Larry Cohen, Paul Monash, and King, of course. They wound up with something like \$1.8 million in screenplays and they weren't close to opening a lens. At the time there were something like nine different vampire movies being made, and they panicked. They asked Richard and I if we could take one of these scripts, go to Maine, and come back in nine months with a movie. It was the greatest idea we'd ever heard!"

Romero went to Maine and visited with King for several days. It was their first meeting. Although the project fell through shortly afterwards, the two kept in touch. King, it turned out, was as much a fan of Romero's as Romero was of King, and the author pointed out that several other novels were still up for grabs. King lined up the available titles on a shelf and told Romero to take what he liked. Romero chose *The Stand*, an 800-page epic tale of the apocalypse. "Nobody really wanted to do *The Stand* because they were looking at it sideways," Romero laughed.

Of course, all talk about doing a project together was predicated on using King's own screenplay, something which hadn't been done before when adapting his novels to the screen. Of the three King novels that have been filmed, only Brian De Palma's *CARRIE* (adapted by

Lawrence D. Cohen) has met with the approval of King's loyal readers. "After my books have been purchased, people realize that there's something under the visual images that isn't so easy to translate," said King.

"You can't cut Steve's books down that easily," Romero agreed. "They're not junk. What's happened to some of Steve's books is typical of how the studio system works. The people who are responsible for acquiring the property have a blank check from the office upstairs, so the properties get bought. But as soon as they arrive, those guys say, 'Oh, what the fuck are we gonna do with this?'"

King's experience as a screenwriter began when, wanting to do his own script for *THE SHINING* (prior to Kubrick's involvement), he adapted Ray Bradbury's *Something Wicked This Way Comes* as something of a dry run. Several other scripts were subsequently commissioned and completed, but none have been filmed, partly because the projects haven't been able to get off the ground: a script for NBC-TV, based on short stories in the *Night Shift* collection, was killed by the Standards and Practices people; and King's screenplay for another *Night Shift* story, "Children of the Corn," was nearly set to roll when producer Joseph Masefield had trouble securing financing.

As for *The Stand*, King has written two drafts, and is working on a third. But as hefty sums of money are generally required to film epics, *THE STAND* is likely to require major studio backing. The question for King and Romero became: how to get studio backing and retain full artistic control (or: how to have your cake and eat it too)?

That was the topic of discussion one night in the summer of 1979, as Romero and Rubinstein traveled to Maine to drink beer with King,

and bounce ideas off each other for what King called a "tune-up," an inexpensive, preliminary project that would earn big bucks and give Romero a bigger club to swing when it came to filming *THE STAND*. "Originally, we wanted to find something we could do as an original, because original stories are cheaper," King said. "This was the time that all of the HALLOWEEN ripoffs started to come out. None of them seemed very scary, and our idea was to find something that would scare people so continuously and so badly that they'd have to crawl out of the theater."

Romero's reaction to the idea? "My face lit up," he beamed.

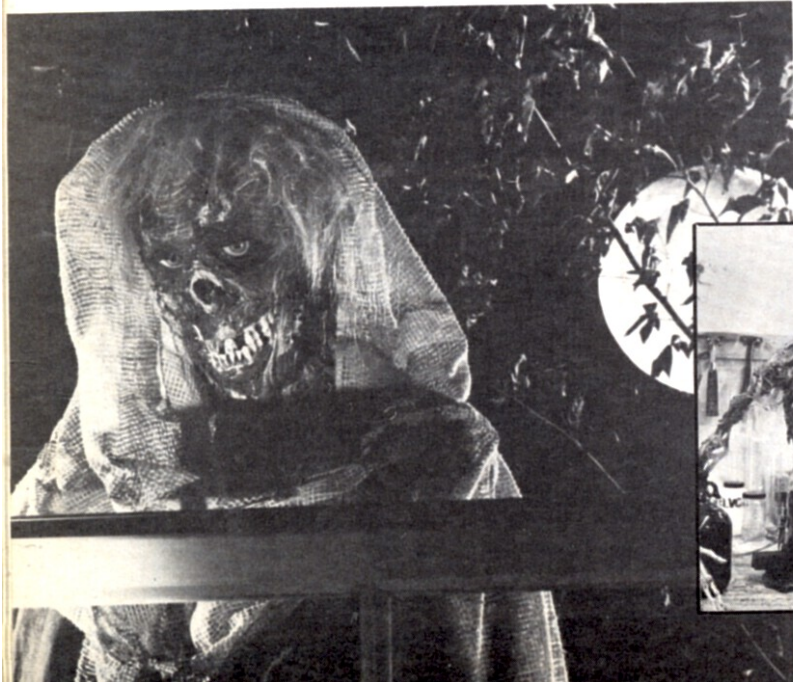
But how to send audiences upside down with popcorn and Jujubes in their hair? One idea was a series of horror "blackouts"—short sketches leading to a major scare. "When we first talked about it, I wanted to do five stories in five completely different styles," Romero said. "We'd even change the screen format—one in black and white, one in color, even one in 3D. We decided that it was maybe a little too experimental, a little too radical and uncomfortable. Steve actually came up with the idea of it being a comic book and having sort of a story around it."

The next morning, King came down to breakfast with a demonic grin. "I have the title!" the author announced. "It's *CREEPSHOW*!" Sixty days later, in October of 1979, Romero had his script, a blend of gut-wrenching horror, dark humor and King's unique brand of realistic characterizations. "My idea would be that the audience will be screaming and laughing at the same time," King said.

The script is also more than a little reminiscent of the old E.C. comic books—favorites of both King and Romero—in which the stories had little real motivation, other than to serve as a vehicle for some utterly horrific incident. Kids in 1950 were delighted by the comics, which featured such lurid titles as "Tales From The Crypt," "The Vault of Horror" and "The Haunt of Fear." However, parents were somewhat more skeptical, and tended to blame the pulps for everything from juvenile delinquency to drug abuse to crime in the streets. The controversy was fueled by the 1954 book, *Seduction of the Innocent* by psychiatrist Fredric Wertham, an all-out attack on comic books, crime comics in particular.

With public outcry growing, and the death of the entire industry a distinct possibility in the Cold War frenzy, a group of publishers banded together to form the self-regulating Comics Code Authority. The standards prohibited the very use of the words "horror" or "terror" in titles, and called for the elimination of all scenes of horror and excessive bloodshed. "All lurid, unsavory, gruesome illustra-

THE SPECTRE featured in the film's prologue and linking segments is a reworking of the "Old Witch," "The Cryptkeeper" and other narrators of the E.C. comics. Left: The Spectre hovers outside the bedroom window of little Billy. Below: Savini at work on the Spectre, built up with foam latex over a real human skeleton, and rigged with cable-controlled movements.



tions shall be eliminated," the code read. "Scenes dealing with, or instruments associated with walking dead or torture shall not be used." Publisher William Gaines got out of the comics business, and shifted his attention to transforming one of his comics, *Mad*, into a magazine.

It didn't seem to matter that the stories in E.C. comics actually had a strong moral code of their own: the bad guy always got it in the end. "E.C. comics were the last gasp of romanticism in America," according to King. "The scales were always put back in balance, even if it meant that this decomposing, rotting corpse had to get out of the ground and go after the people who killed him."

The influence of these comics on *CREEPSHOW*—and its creators—can't be overstated. The film is based around a young boy's horror comic, which is thrown in the trash one stormy night by mean ol' Dad. The scene brings back memories for Romero, who had his E.C.'s taken away, too. "I was only allowed to read things like 'Pogo' and 'Donald Duck,'" Romero said. "I smuggled the E.C.'s in, though! I'd go somewhere with them and listen to some Alan Freed!"

CREEPSHOW comes to life when a ghoulish spectre—resembling the Old Witch and Crypt Keeper who used to introduce the stories in E.C.—appears at the boy's window, beckoning our attention to the comic book in the trash can while bearing a delightful "Hi, boys and ghouls!" grin. As the pages of the comic flip open in the wind, the opening "splash page" of each story dissolves into the live action.

The first story, "Father's Day," tells of a well-to-do clan who gather at the family mansion once a year on Father's Day. But it's not to honor dad—rather to honor the fact that the wicked old bastard is dead. Nate Grantham (Jon Lormer) was murdered seven years ago by his repressed daughter, Bedelia (Viveca Lindfors), when his shouts of "I want my Father's Day cake!" got on her nerves. Well they might, since Nate murdered Bedelia's boyfriend in a hunting "accident." Each year on Father's Day, Bedelia goes to her father's grave. But this year, there's a surprise: Nate's corpse grabs her by the throat and bellows, "I WANT MY CAKE!"

"'Father's Day' is a deliberate E.C. pastiche," King explained. "To my mind, it's the archetypal E.C. story, with the dead guy coming back and relentlessly offing his family, one after the other. I sat down at the typewriter and said, 'Okay, somebody's going to come out of the grave.' I rarely work that way, but it worked this time for me."

Humor, rather than horror, played a big part in adapting "Weeds," a short story King pub-



Top: Nate Grantham finally gets his Father's Day cake—the head of Carrie Nye! To achieve the illusion, the actress' head was stuck through a cake platter and fitted with a bloody foam latex appliance (shown above, prior to final detailing). Right: artwork by E.C. veteran Jack Kamen, used to dissolve from the live action to the animated comic book that links the stories.



lished in the May 1976 issue of *Cavalier*, into "The Lonesome Death of Jordy Verrill," the second story in *CREEPSHOW*'s cycle. Jordy Verrill (played by King himself) is a simple-minded Maine farmer whose big goal in life is to pay off his \$200 bank loan. When a meteor lands on his field, he sees a chance to change a lifetime of bad luck, and he dumps a bucket of cold water on the glowing rock to cool it. Bad idea: the meteor cracks open and out spews a gooey green slime—"meteorshit" Jordy calls it, after burning his fingers trying to

touch it. Actually, it's super-seed that sprouts weeds everywhere, even on Jordy's blistered fingers. Eventually, Jordy is completely consumed by the plant. Rather than go on as a frightened, lonely six-foot-tall plant, he pulls the trigger of a shotgun aimed at its head.

King originally wrote "Weeds" as the first chapter of a novel. "It was written before *Carrie*, back in 1970 or '71," King said. "But once the weeds started to grow towards town and the story started to spread beyond that closed world, I couldn't

find any more to say."

The story was chosen to add variety to the walking corpses. But in adapting it, King lightened the tone considerably. Some passages from the original are almost too painful to read:

"He fell asleep halfway through the afternoon soap operas. When he woke up at five o'clock, he was blind in his right eye. He looked in the mirror and moaned. His faded blue eye was gone. What was in the socket now was a waving green jungle of weeds, and some of the little creepers hung halfway down his cheek.

"He put his hand up to his face



The two faces of "Fluffy": the cable-controlled head (right) was able to drool, sneer and puff its cheeks, and featured acrylic teeth that were filed down to sharp points. Tom Savini also built an "attack head" (left), with foam rubber teeth that made it safer to film scenes of the creature biting people.

The Making of "Fluffy"

*It walks! It talks! It puffs its cheeks!
It's Tom Savini's first real monster!*

The creature inside "The Crate" was by far the most complex assignment facing Tom Savini and his small makeup crew. To make matters even tougher, Savini had never tackled a man-in-suit before, and had to consult Rob Bottin (*THE THING*, *THE HOWLING*) on the problems of cable-controlled mechanics.

The suit—which was worn by Darryl Ferrucci—was made of foam latex, covered with \$2,000 of yak hair. Where the hair was dense, the yak hair was glued down in small clumps. For the face and other critical areas, each strand was individually punched into foam latex, to simulate actual growth patterns. The suit extended only as far as Ferrucci's waist—during filming, his legs were kept hidden and an assistant worked the feet from below.

Ferrucci wore a helmet, to which a fiberglass "skull" was attached. The skull featured a spring-loaded jaw with an inner chin cup Ferrucci could use to open the mouth. The skull was also rigged with cable-controlled, hinged mechanisms above both eyes, on both sides of the skull in the area of the upper lip, and in the middle of the lower lip. The foam latex face was stretched over the

Tom Savini and a production assistant help Darryl Ferrucci into costume as the creature in "The Crate."

skull and attached at key points. With a little practice, Fluffy's eyebrows could be made to cross and his lips could snarl realistically.

To make the cheeks puff in and out, condoms were attached to the skull under the latex and inflated with a rubber air pump. Part of Ferrucci's job was buying the condoms, which are suited for a number of makeup applications. "I just run in and say, 'I

need three dozen condoms, non-lubed,'" grinned Ferrucci. "Sometimes I take six or nine dozen, just to be flashy!"

Savini also wanted Fluffy to drool. "Gorillas and werewolves have never been wet," he explained. "Rick Baker does absolutely perfect sculptures and mechanisms, but King Kong's mouth was never wet—he didn't look

alive to me." Accordingly, Fluffy was rigged to exude moisture from the nose and mouth, and Savini simulated cold sores in the creature's eyes.

The face was completed with a foam rubber tongue—which hid Ferrucci's face—acrylic teeth cast from an actual gorilla skull, and a pair of cat's eye contact lenses. Life inside Fluffy, as with any full-body suit, was unbearable at best. Ferrucci could only wear the lenses for 15 minutes before getting a headache, there was little air inside the suit, and it was hot under all that yak hair. "We'd put powder inside the hands between takes," Ferrucci said. "Pretty soon, the power wasn't even effective. It mixed with the sweat and became a weird paste."

In addition to the cable-activated head, Savini and his crew made two less complicated versions of the creature. For shots of the creature biting its victims, a head and shoulders puppet, with foam rubber teeth, was built over a rigid under-skull. A simplified mask was also built for an underwater shot, filmed in a large tank at the Penn Hall Academy.



To minimize the gore, the attack scenes were photographed in bright red light, which made it difficult to see the blood. Left: The janitor (Don Keefer) is pulled inside the crate. Right: Darryl Ferrucci relaxes on the set between takes.



before he could stop himself. He couldn't just rip the stuff out, the way you would hoe up the witchgrass in your tomato sets. He couldn't do that because his eye was in there someplace. "Wasn't it?"

While King's story is still poignantly horrible, it has become more of a comical look at human foibles. "Jordy Verrill is like somebody that we all know," King said. "We've all got lunkhead tendencies. It was George's idea that Jordy should become real broad. It was good for me, because it gave me a hook to hang the performance on."

For example, Jordy fantasizes striking it rich, bringing the meteor to a local college's "Department of Meteors" to bargain with a caricatured scientist. "When we actually see our fantasies played out, they become funny," King said. "I think that's the point where it changed, in my own mind, to a piece that's really a comedy."

The third story, "Something To Tide You Over," is an original story that, like "Father's Day," fits into the E.C. mold of nasty people getting their just desserts. "I just flashed on what we used to do as kids, which was to bury ourselves up to the neck in sand," King said. "There was some movie about Bluebeard I remembered, where they shot him in the hips and left him below the high tide line. I thought, 'Aha! That's it!'"

In the story, hotshot TV producer Richard Vickers (Leslie Nielsen) has learned that his wife, Becky (Gaylen Ross, the female lead in *DAWN OF THE DEAD*), is having an affair with Harry Wentworth (Ted Danson). Not one to take such infidelities lightly, Vickers tricks Harry into coming out to his beach estate and allowing himself to be buried neck-deep in the wet, heavy sand below the high tide line. As the water draws near, Vickers plops a TV set in front of Harry's face, bringing him some live entertainment—Becky is in a similar predicament, but closer to the water, so he gets to watch her go first. Vickers, unfortunately for him, is not aware that drowned corpses don't always stay drowned in a comic book.

King's fans may notice a similarity between "Something To Tide You Over" and *Night Shift's* "The Ledge," in which a jealous husband forces his wife's lover to walk a narrow ledge around a high-rise apartment building. "I had never thought of that," King laughed. "As a matter of fact, the script for 'Tide' had some very 'Ledge'-like things in it." In "Ledge," the protagonist encounters a rather savage bird blocking his way; the script for "Tide" has an equally savage seagull, along with a blood-thirsty sand crab, both of whom figure it's all right to take advantage of poor, helpless Harry. "They were cut out because the bird was just impossible," King said, "and the crabs they got were nasty! I

mean, Ted was in this hole up to his neck, and the crabs were gonna do a number on his face!"

Most folks would probably prefer to face a New Jersey sand crab than the creature in "The Crate," the film's fourth, and longest segment. Adapted from a short story published in the July 1979 issue of *Gallery* (and included in several subsequent anthologies), the tale was a natural for *CREEP-SHOW*: a 150-year-old crate is found by a janitor underneath the stairs leading to the basement of an old university zoology lab. The janitor excitedly tells Dexter Stanley (Fritz Weaver), head of the department, and the pair make the mistake of opening it. The janitor is promptly pulled inside and eaten alive by a ferocious, whistling mass of hair and teeth. The same fate befalls a young grad student Dexter rushes by when he flees in panic. Dexter turns to his close friend and colleague, Henry Northrup (Hal Holbrook), who is married to Wilma (Adrienne Barbeau), the human equivalent of whatever's inside the crate. Henry has fantasized about killing his wife, and is inspired into action by the tale of carnage. When Dexter wakes up the next morning, head aching from a glass of drugged whiskey, he discovers that Henry has taken care of both problems.

Though it probably didn't contain a living garbage disposal, a report of a *real* crate inspired King's story. "This crate was found underneath the stairs at the University of Maine, which was where I went to college," King explained. "They were closing down the chemistry building and they found all this stuff, including a crate that had been under the stairs for about a hundred years. What got to me was the idea of a hundred years' worth of students going up and down those stairs with the crate right underneath! It probably had nothing in it but old magazines, but it kind of tripped over in my mind that it could have been something really sinister in there."

The creature itself was actually inspired by a Saturday morning cartoon that King's kids were watching, featuring the destructive Tasmanian Devil. "You know, all teeth!" said King, doing a remarkably accurate impression of its voice. "I thought, 'Jesus Christ, that's not funny! That's horrible!'"

After walking corpses, space plants, and furry monsters, what could King use for the film's finale? Cockroaches, what else. Upon Pratt (E. G. Marshall) is a crotchety old bastard who hasn't been entirely ethical in his climb to the top of the business world. One night, after a particularly nasty deal results in an associate's suicide—"just another bug," Pratt snickers—he finds that (in classic E.C. style) he's about to get *his* from a hoard of invading insects. Worse



George Romero directs Viveca Lindfors in a flashback sequence for "Father's Day." Lindfors plays Aunt Bedelia, shown identifying the body of her dead lover, Yarbro, who was murdered by Bedelia's father, Nathan Grantham. Inset: Yarbro's bloodied remains as seen in the morgue, made by Tom Savini by ripping apart a foam latex mask to suggest the blast of a shotgun.



still, there's a blackout, leaving him alone—well, not quite—with his cans of bug spray as a feeble defense.

When the script was finished, there was some doubt as to whether the story could actually be included, given the budgetary and technical limitations. "Originally, it was a mixture of spiders, cockroaches and beetles, and bugs that didn't even exist, like the little rubber horrors from novelty shops," said King. When the inherent problems were pointed out, King gave his standard response: "That's *their* problem, not mine. My feeling is that if I can do it in a book, I'll put it in a screenplay. If they can't do it, then we'll work something out." King was, in fact, prepared to replace the tale with the story of a hitchhiker, until a few simple changes—including using cockroaches exclusively—were made.

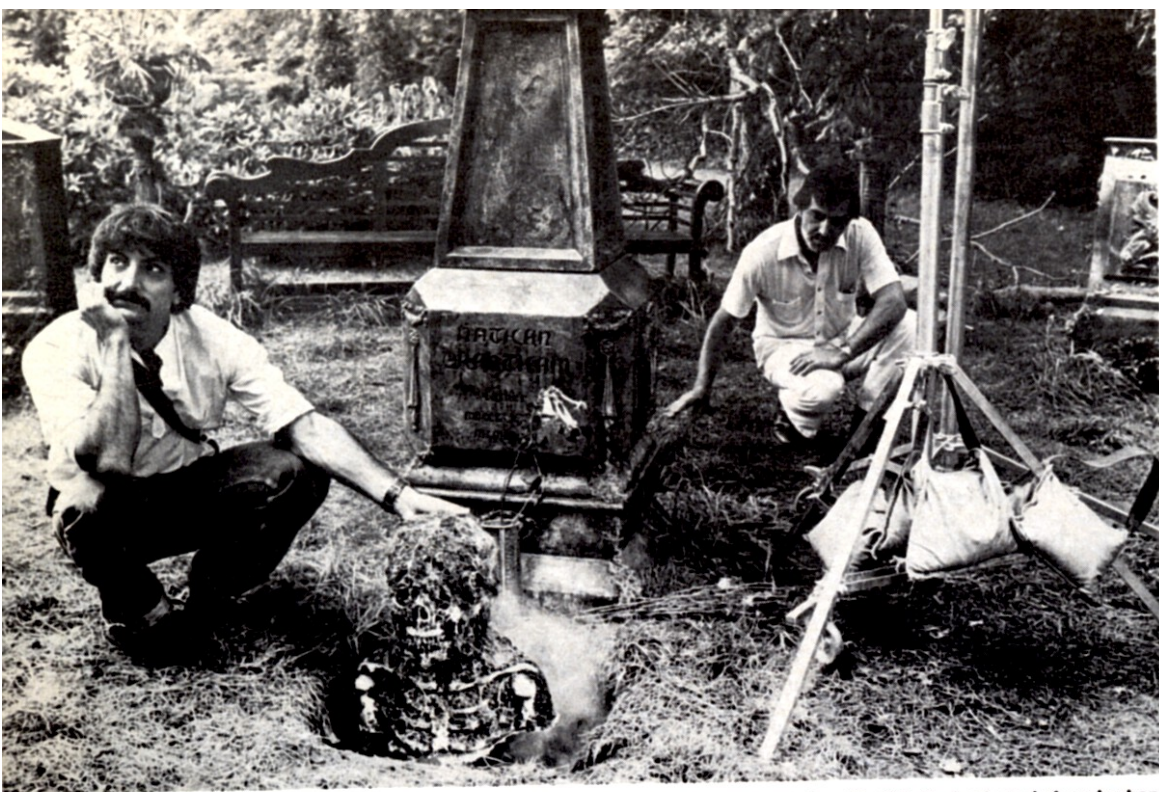
Since the film is an anthology, there remained the rather thorny question of how to link the stories together. According to King, the framing stories in past horror anthologies have been silly and contrived. "There are people going down in an elevator, and they sit around in a room and tell these stories, and then—ho, ho!—they find out they're dead," said King, referring to Milton Subotsky's anthology of E.C. stories, *THE VAULT OF HORROR*. "Or maybe they're on a train and they're telling these stories, and then—ho, ho!—the train ends up in hell. I wasn't wild about the idea of a framing story from the beginning. I thought we could just do the stories and that'll be it." But King was responsive to using Romero's idea

of the comic book itself as the framing device. "If you're not willing to collaborate on a creative level with the director," King added, "why are you involved with it at all?"

When King handed his 142-page script to Romero, the director was delighted. "We started to shoot the film without even a second draft," Romero said. "We didn't talk very seriously about any changes or doing anything to it until we started to shoot. Then, I came up with some ideas and showed them to Steve. The ones he liked, we kept, and the things he didn't like he came back with other ideas on."

King's intimate involvement with the production throughout filming freed Romero from the usual, day-to-day rewriting burden. For example, Laurel makes a practice of rewriting lines for the eventual TV version. "I'd much rather that *we* do the job and mix the tracks ourselves," Romero said. "With Steve being around, if I indicated that we had TV problems, he would sit down overnight and put alternate dialogue into my hands the next morning." Having King rewrite his own dialogue insured that the import and intent of a scene would remain unchanged, even if the language varied.

For example, when Jordy Verrill goes to sit down in his living room (a scene ultimately cut from the film), he notices the green growth sprouting from where his arm had been resting earlier. He thinks for a moment, and says, "I don't give a fuck—it's *my* chair and I'm going to sit in it!" Once an acceptable take was in the can, Romero called for the "TV cover" version: "I don't give a tin whistle . . ."



Tom Savini (l) and George Romero check a set-up on the graveyard set for "Father's Day," built in the back yard of a suburban Pittsburgh mansion. The headstones were made of styrofoam, carved and painted to match the concept sketches of production designer Cletus Anderson. Savini is holding the foam latex mask used for the rotted corpse of "Dead Nate." During filming, the mask (and a full-body costume) was worn by John Amplas. To make life underground more comfortable for Amplas, the grave was outfitted with carpeting, wooden walls, reading lights and a ventilation system.

Compared with some of their other projects, Romero and Rubinstein had a relatively easy job getting CREEPSHOW financed. With a simple package—the script, a rough budget and poster art by E.C. veteran Jack Kamen (a friend of Rubinstein's family)—the project was shopped around Hollywood early in 1980.

"We were able to get in to see anybody we wanted to, but we were not able to get our terms," said Romero, who added that the stumbling block was *creative*, not financial. "People wanted to warp it around into something else. There was one group who wanted to change the title into something more marketable, like THE TWILIGHT ZONE."

Meanwhile, Romero was in production on KNIGHTRIDERS, part of his three-picture package with UFD. Turning to UFD again, Romero found the \$8 million he needed, and CREEPSHOW went into preproduction in early 1981.

Romero did not have to look far in assembling his crew, either. To handle the film's makeup effects, he turned to old friend Tom Savini, who first worked with him on MARTIN. Michael Gornick was slated as cinematographer, a job he's held on Romero's previous three films. Cletus Anderson, who heads the design department at Carnegie Mellon signed on as production designer. Likewise Anderson's wife, Barbara, assumed costume design chores, both working on their second Romero film in a row.

The \$8 million budget allowed

Romero a luxury he had never been able to afford before: shooting in the controlled environment of a sound stage. The film's production headquarters—the Penn Hall Academy, an abandoned grammar school in a serene, wooded area of Monroeville—was an ideal setting. Classrooms became offices, editing rooms and prop shops. The gymnasium, actually a separate building, housed all of the film's interiors, the scenic shop (under the supervision of Ed Fountain), Tom Savini's makeup workshop and other offices.

While the gym of the Penn Hall Academy did have its problems—it wasn't very soundproof, and shooting often had to pause for a plane or truck to pass—it was a taste of Hollywood for Romero & Co. "In terms of control, it was an absolute dream," said cinematographer Michael Gornick.

Filming began in late July of 1981. The biggest challenge facing the company was imposed by the anthology format: how to make each of the stories look different, yet make the film appear as a unified whole. The key, it turned out, was approximating the deep, rich colors of the E.C. comics with exaggerated, saturated lighting and highly-stylized backgrounds—an impressionistic approach used occasionally in stage lighting, but seldom, if ever, on film. "It wasn't until late May, about a month and a half before we started shooting, that Steve and George thought to affect the look of the film," Gornick explained. "I spent about a month working with a variety of color gels and experimenting with

backgrounds. We even made new discoveries about what we wanted to do while shooting the first story, 'Father's Day.'"

The segment was filmed at a gothic-looking mansion in Fox Chapel, a Pittsburgh suburb, both with and without the unusual lighting effects. "Because it was such a new gimmick, the money people were concerned," Gornick said. "But as it got rolling, and people saw rushes and dailies, they realized that it brought the whole concept one step further to the audience. By the time we got through 'Father's Day,' it was a given."

One of the biggest problems with CREEPSHOW's bright colors was trying to convince the lab technicians to stop trying to "color correct" the footage. "The lab thought we had gone completely whacko," Gornick laughed. "They were happy when they would have an occasional normal exterior—they felt we were back in range again!"

Another visual touch lifted from comic books involved jagged patterns behind the actors that appear at key moments in the film. A diffusive lighting scrim was sandwiched with a sheet of plexiglass, onto which the appropriate pattern was painted. "If you light it normally, from the front, it looks like a smooth background," explained lighting technician Alan Brennecke. "But if you fade the light out and bring up a colored light behind the scrim, the glowing background would appear."

The use of these intricate lighting effects did not delay CREEPSHOW's 17-week shooting sched-

ule, due to careful pre-planning and the efficient, though surprisingly leisurely pace at which Romero works. Despite the relatively tight budget, Romero never rushed a shot or lost his cool when things fouled up. It's the one personality trait newcomers to the Laurel family kept bringing up.

"When George finished shooting a sequence, he'd say something like, 'Hey, now that we have the set up, let's sit back and look at it for a while and see what other kind of horrible goodies we can come up with,'" recalled Ray Mendez, who helped wrangle the 22,000 roaches needed for the film's final segment. "It takes the tension out, and you can start to be creative. That was very important to me."

Romero's laid-back mannerisms were not appreciated by everyone, however, including the original assistant director, who quit the show shortly after production began. "This guy was right out of the DGA [Director's Guild] program, and that discipline is a little bit different from the way George likes to work," said John Harrison, who eventually took over the position. In fact, even Romero admits the pace is a bit *too* relaxed for some studio-trained personnel—so much so that another assistant director was hired and fired before Romero pegged Harrison, a local filmmaker who was developing a project with Laurel at the time. "I had never been a first assistant director—I had no traditional background," explained Harrison, who was persuaded by Richard Rubinstein that being a member of the "family" was the important thing. "He told me they wanted somebody who was a friend of George and who could keep the lines of communication open so nobody would feel left behind or ridden over roughshod."

CREEPSHOW's visual look was coordinated by production designer Cletus Anderson, who prepared a series of detailed sketches and paintings of the various sets needed based on a reading of King's highly-descriptive screenplay. Inspiration also came from wandering through the halls of Carnegie Mellon University, Romero's alma mater and Anderson's full-time employer. Parts of "The Crate" were shot on location there, and sets for that segment were inspired by the campus. "There are some half-forgotten areas at the school that are rather spooky," Anderson said. "I went through one building in particular and did my research that way."

The CMU look was insured by taking advantage of a used equipment sale, held by the university—provisionally—during production. "I bought all kinds of scientific equipment that was so out of date they didn't want it," said prop man Bruce Miller. "I bought everything that they could drag out—I

did almost the entire laboratory with the stuff I got in that one day!"

At CREEPSHOW's "prop sale"—Laurel makes a habit of selling off unwanted props at the end of each production—prop man Bill Bilowit shelled out 35¢ for the hot item, a small jar of a dark liquid called "theed," which had come from a CMU lab. What's theed? "It's thomething that you plant to grow grath," Bilowit smiled.

One of Anderson's biggest challenges were the sets for "The Lonesome Death of Jordy Verrill," a junk strewn farmyard with a 1950s feel, built in and around the Penn Hall Academy. "The original idea was to find a farm that we could change around for the story," said Anderson. But after touring local farms, and determining the amount of redressing called for in the story, Anderson simply built three-sided facades of the farmhouse and out-buildings on a nearby vacant lot.

Anderson worked with Bruce Miller, head of the props department, to collect the variety of junk that clutters the sets. "I took Cletus' drawings with me to flea markets, garage sales and these fabulous junk stores in Pittsburgh," Miller said. "The only specific things we had to hit were Jordy's armchair, the television [a 1950s model] and the big pieces of furniture. All the other pieces were picked because I thought they were interesting to look at. I kept buying until they said 'We're at budget.'" Miller also built the slimy meteor itself, made of fiberglass, sponges, paint and green ooze (a combination of molasses, Kayro syrup, food coloring and a commercial glow-in-the-dark formula).

Several different departments—including a special props crew headed by Bill Bilowit—teamed up to create the unearthly weeds that cover Jordy's land, house and person. "There were certain descriptions in the script, such as 'tendrils' and lines like, 'It hung like cypress moss.' But the only thing we knew was that it was green,"

Bilowit said. "It took weeks and weeks and dozens and dozens of people trying to figure it all out."

As a starting point, Cletus Anderson drew a large, mature plant indicating various stages and growth patterns, including roots, vines, branches and hairy tendrils. "Cletus wanted it to be lush—almost sensuous," said Bilowit. "It's not a giant venus fly trap, or something saying, 'Feed me!' It's rather pretty, actually, especially in the last stages."

Working in several of the Penn Hall Academy classrooms, Bilowit created the various plant stages in small pieces for flexibility and mobility. Props ranged from green-painted broom straws pushed into mossy, latex bases, to actual tree limbs, sanded down and dressed with a furry, green-dyed material. Other materials used included artificial plants, sea sponge, fried moss, Spanish moss and long, goopy tendrils of latex. "We went through a lot of anolin dye," Bilowit said, "and I can't remember how many cans of fluorescent green spray paint!" The dye and paint gave the "weeds" a suitably-unearthly glowing effect, enhanced by Michael Gornick's saturated lighting design.

Bilowit rigged several props to show the plant "growing," including a phone, a water bucket and one of the three meteor craters built for the segment. The "plants" were pulled down into tubes attached to each prop, and the footage was reverse printed to give the illusions of growth. "Depending on how many people you've got under the strands, you can get different rates of speed," Bilowit explained. "There's a lot of license. As Stephen King said, 'There isn't too much logic to this growth.'"

For the plants that sprout on Jordy himself, Tom Savini created green "blisters" for Stephen King's hands and lips, and applied the first stages of the hairy growth—green-dyed yak and horse hair woven into net-like fabric, created



Short animated segments of the Creepshow comic's pages turning in the wind—supplied by Rick Catzone's Pittsburgh-based Anivision studio—were used to link the individual stories. A life-sized mock-up of the comic book was photographed like a stop-motion model, and inserted into a cel-animation background.

by Barbara Anderson's costume department. As the growth on Jordy's hands, chest and face becomes more pronounced, King had to undergo an increasingly uncomfortable makeup procedure. Latex appliances were even applied to his tongue at one point, but his speech was slurred so badly that a green slime was substituted. And taking off the dyed animal hair was almost as bad as having it put on. But King, in his first major role, was philosophical about the ordeal.

"I never worried about the makeup work, and I think that you never should," said King, who kept a good-luck charm in his pocket during filming—a small, green plastic model of "Greedo" from STAR WARS. "If you count the cost of something, it's no good. You've gotta say either, 'I can or can't do it,' or 'I want to or I don't.' If you get to the point where you ask, 'Do I want to do this? Do I want to be smelling that awful acetone [a solvent used to remove the makeup]? then you're a fuckin' accountant! You might as well forget what you're doing and become something else."

One of the most difficult design assignments involved Upson Pratt's apartment in "They're Creeping Up On You." Originally, Cletus Anderson had designed a lush penthouse, with a maze of hallways, a thick carpet and an array of antique furniture. Pretty, but impractical, considering the tens of thousands of cockroaches who star in the segment.

Anderson was forced to rethink the design following a miniature "screen test" given to a bucket of roaches collected by David Brody, an entomologist at New York's Museum of Natural History. Brody set up a small plexiglass set, furnished with a piece of curtain, some carpeting and a miniature sink, then dumped in the bucket of bugs. "Within 20 seconds, there wasn't one bug in sight!" Romero recalled. "We were looking at this thing and saying, 'Where did they go?' They all found somewhere to hide." Anderson's new set was a stark white, sterile, hospital-type environment, reflecting Pratt's obsessive cleanliness. It also made the bugs a lot easier to deal with.

Left: Adrienne Barbeau portrays Wilma—the bitchy, overbearing wife of college professor Hal Holbrook, shown tormenting him at an outdoor faculty party. Right: Holbrook searches under a stairwell for the ravenous creature in *The Crate*, which he sees as an inexpensive, albeit bloody, alternative to divorce.





Stephen King and his son Joe, who portrays Billy, the little boy whose "Creepshow" comic book is taken away by his father at the start of the film.

Stephen King's script originally called for a variety of creepy crawlers, but it had been decided to limit the infestation to cockroaches. But not all bugs are created equal. Consider the *Blabarus Gigantea*, a rare species that can be found in caves in Trinidad under several feet of bat guano. They are five inches long—not quite your typical swat-with-a-magazine water bug—and were deemed perfect for CREEPSHOW. Ultimately, more than a thousand were collected by Brody and Ray Mendez, an alumnus of the Museum of Natural History who has branched out into advertising, wildlife photography and monster movies, having helped design the mechanical snake for DEATH BITE (12/2/12:3:88).

Brody and Mendez spent a week sifting through the, er, droppings of fruit bats. It wasn't a pleasant sight—Trinidad residents hired as porters refused to enter the cave. In addition to the *Blabarus Gigantea*, the pair rounded up another 6,000 two-inch roaches from the same Trinidad cave, and bought about 16,000 standard American roaches from companies that supply schools and research labs.

Back in Pittsburgh, one of the makeup trailers behind the gym was refurbished to accommodate the 50-gallon drums that became

the "roach motel." The bugs—which were fed bananas, dog food and lettuce—were a big hit with the cast and crew, despite the "Nobody Allowed" sign posted outside the trailer. "We had a couple of visiting days where you could come in and look at the roaches," Mendez said.

If the thought of thousands of roaches in steel drums was intriguing to most folks, the thought of them scampering around the set was another matter. To ease the concerns of the company, Brody and Mendez gave a slide show on roaches one day after lunch. "Fear, in many ways, is ignorance," Mendez said. "I wanted everyone to have a little bit more of an idea of where the animals lived, and why there were oodles and oodles of them in that one cave."

To help contain and control the roaches during filming, a series of plexiglass partitions were put up around the sets. In addition, for each individual shot, 3½-foot styrofoam walls were set up just outside of camera range, smeared with Vaseline so the roaches couldn't climb over. That was the theory, anyway. "Some of these cockroaches were fucking enthusiastic!" said Stephen King. "They managed to crawl over the Vaseline, and people had to push them

back down."

Even with the precautions taken to seal the set, conditions were not always perfect for dealing with large numbers of bugs. "If you're not used to dealing with insects, you don't realize just how closed we mean when we say *closed*," Mendez said. "It's got to be like being in a Thermos!" In one shot early in the schedule, Romero wanted to shoot roaches pouring out of an air vent. Mendez and the prop department set up a funnel system behind the vent, but failed to seal off the backstage area. When the bugs were released, many of them skittered in the wrong direction and got into the gym's food area.

"I consider myself very fortunate that the crew did not kill me that day," Mendez laughed. "It was my fault—I fell into the pressure of having to film before I was completely ready. Unfortunately, the camera didn't get the shot and we had 2,000 roaches running around the set. A lot of people were very upset. I ended up running into Tom Savini's workshop to hide from the crew."

Other minor incidents involving the roaches left various members of the cast and crew feeling a bit frazzled—especially Tom Savini, the King of Splatter Makeup. "I was never in the same room with any cockroach at any time," stated Savini, who had to coordinate several makeup effects with the movements of the bugs. "Once, we were doing a test of the cockroaches and the dummy head of E. G. Marshall, and one of the bugs touched my hand. I flipped out. I *appeared* on the other side of the room. I didn't have the sensation of running away, I simply *appeared* across the room, flinging the cockroach against the wall and turning grey. When I *had* to be there for an effect, I called 'action' and cued the blood and the cockroaches from outside the plexiglass-enclosed room where the bugs were."

E. G. Marshall, who stars as the cockroaches' victim, was made of sterner stuff. Although a clause in his contract could have exempted him from having the roaches

placed on him, whenever it was necessary for the shot, he was game. "Brody and I showed him the roaches, and his comment was along the lines of, 'Hey, I'm from New York! We've got roaches everywhere!'" Mendez recalled. "The only time he 'lost it' was when one of the four-inch bugs ran up his neck and got into his hair. You can't blame him, though. He's an actor—he's not supposed to suffer through the manipulations we were putting him through!"

Although handling cockroaches is part of Mendez's job, he almost "lost it" himself at one point, during a sequence that called for a flood of roaches to pour out of the kitchen of Pratt's apartment. At Romero's command of, "Now, pour!" the roaches were released by Mendez, who was kneeling in a small space behind the door. The roaches went through the door, as planned, but many turned back towards Mendez. "I must have had four or five hundred roaches sitting on my head," he said. "I'm used to insects, but this was a bit *much*. Everybody said, 'We got it, great, cut,' and the lights came back on—they were doing some lightning effects—and all I could say was, 'I need help!' I stood up and walked through the kitchen door, and there was nothing but frozen faces and people going, 'Ooohhh gosh!' The photographer said he was so freaked out he forgot to take a picture! I looked like a roach suit."

In addition to sealing off the set, Mendez and Brody used carbon dioxide to control the bugs. The gas would knock out the roaches for about 10 to 15 minutes, which enabled the crew to set up the shot where Pratt throws his bedspread back to find a mass of wriggling roaches. "We put the roaches under the sheets and remade the beds," Mendez said. "We waited for the roaches to wake up. You'd put your hand on the bed and feel it vibrating! Magic fingers! If we didn't gas them first, we wouldn't have been able to put them on the bed and keep the room clean, because they'd be running as fast as we were throwing them on."

WATERLOGGED CORPSES are the big scare in "Something To Tide You Over." They were also among the most time-consuming makeup chores for Tom Savini and his small crew. Shriveled, bloated faces were first sculpted over lifemasks of Ted Danson and Gaylen Ross (near right; sculpture by Rick Catizone) and cast in foam latex. Although the face and neck were a single appliance (shown middle right as Savini works on Ted Danson), it was necessary to create the makeup for the characters' hands and feet from scratch each day. Far Right: makeup assistant Jessie Nathans applies a final touch-up to Danson prior to filming. The corpses' costumes were designed by Barbara Anderson, and featured rotted clothing garnished with foam latex "seaweed" (similar to the tendrils used for "Jordy Verrill") and dried anchovies.





Right: Gaylen Ross faces the onrushing tide while buried in wet sand, the same fate that befalls her lover, Ted Danson (inset top) in "Something To Tide You Over." Although filmed on a real beach, the rushing waters were provided by a homemade "wave machine" (inset above), a sharply inclined metal chute fitted with three large water tanks.



SWhen I see a gore effect in a movie and I say, 'Beautiful!', it's not because I think *gore* is beautiful," contends Tom Savini, the man many say is most responsible for the recent wave of graphic violence in horror films. "I think of all this stuff as magic tricks, like a magician who fools you with misdirection or a mechanical device that you know nothing about. By using tricks like continuity, editing, and sound effects, we make you think you've seen something. When you turn your face away from the screen and scream, the trick worked!"

This sounds surprisingly innocent, coming from the man whose shocking gore effects for films like *DAWN OF THE DEAD*, *FRIDAY THE 13TH* and *MANIAC* have earned him the title of "The King of Splatter." But like many makeup artists who create visions of horror, Savini is a bit innocent, with a soft,

friendly voice that becomes animated and intensely enthusiastic when talking about his work and profession. Savini has a deep admiration for his mentors in the field—an autographed copy of *CFQ's* issue on Dick Smith is enclosed in plastic in Savini's portfolio, and when Smith visited the set of *CREEPSHOW*, Savini followed him around with a video camera to record the event. But Savini's biggest influence is Lon Chaney; specifically, James Cagney's portrayal of Chaney in *MAN OF A THOUSAND FACES*, which Savini first saw at the age of 13.

"I wanted to be like Lon Chaney, and now my dreams are coming true," Savini said as he sculpted details on a wax bust of E. G. Marshall's head. "My life has been kind of like his, as far as personal relationships and broken marriages and all that. And I have a son named Lon."

MAN OF A THOUSAND FACES sent Savini running for his mother's lipsticks and compacts, often making up kids in the neighborhood, but mostly experimenting on himself. "When they were out playing baseball, I was up in my bedroom screwing up my face," Savini laughed. By the time he was 14, he had graduated to professional materials and had landed his first job, part of a traveling group that put on horror and magic shows at movie theaters between the halves of a double bill. By 15, Savini had a non-paying job doing makeup for a Pittsburgh TV station's weekly "Chiller Theater," creating monsters and doing the makeup for the host.

Savini was also bitten by the acting bug early, when a grade school

teacher wanted him to do a skit in each classroom to promote a bake sale. His role carried a lot more than the usual degree of stage fright—he had to do it in drag. "I begged and pleaded," Savini recalled. "I couldn't possibly do that in front of my peers, because you're supposed to be a big, tough kid, you know? But after the first time, I couldn't stop doing it! After that, me and my best friend would put together skits and do them in the hallways. Then I did school plays. For the first two years of high school, I was the lead dancer in the school musicals."

Savini first met George Romero during his junior year of high school, when Romero was casting for a project called *WHINE OF THE FAWN*. Although the film never got made, Savini made a strong impression, and Romero remembered him three years later, in 1968, when *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* was in the works. A journalism major in college, Savini heard about the project and called Romero to let him know about his makeup skills. Romero asked to see samples, but Savini never had the chance: he was called into the Army and sent to Vietnam as a combat photographer.

"I had a makeup kit even in Vietnam," Savini said. "I would order makeup supplies and have them delivered to me there. I wanted to see everything, and I didn't know if I was coming back or not."

After his combat tour, Savini was stationed in North Carolina for 18 months. Following his discharge, he began working at a local theater as an actor and makeup artist, doing a play every two months for six years. "I did a lot of character

stuff—Arthur in 'Camelot,' Ben Franklin in '1776.' That's where I did a lot of my makeup research."

Between the theater assignments, Savini picked up extra cash painting signs. He was delivering some to a bar when he met Forrest Carpenter, the art director of Bob Clark's *CHILDREN SHOULDN'T PLAY WITH DEAD THINGS*. Savini had his portfolio in the car, showed it to Carpenter, and was hired as Alan Ormsby's makeup assistant for Clark's next project, *DEATHDREAM*, for which he created assorted bullet hits, an old-age makeup and a dummy body that is run over by a car. Clark and Ormsby liked Savini's work enough to hire him for their next film, *DERANGED*, a story based on the bizarre life of Wisconsin mass murderer Ed Gein. His effects involved lots of corpses, and—as in *THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE*, also based on Gein's exploits—furniture made from parts of human bodies.

By 1976, Savini had returned to his native Pittsburgh to teach makeup and return to school on a fellowship from Carnegie Mellon University. During his freshman year, Savini heard about the filming of *MARTIN* and auditioned for Romero. John Amplis had already been cast as the "vampire," but Savini, undaunted, followed Romero from room to room, flipping through the pages of his portfolio. Three days later, he was hired to do the makeup. He also landed a small role, and did some stunt work. "The more you can do, the more you get to do, I've learned," Savini said.

The effects in *MARTIN* are the first real examples of the kind of



"splatter" effects Savini has become noted for: Martin uses a razor blade to open the wrist of his first victim, plunges a pointed stick into the neck of another victim, and is finally staked at the end. After completing the project, Savini returned for his junior year at CMU, and spent his summer vacation back in North Carolina, playing Prince Philip in "The Lion in Winter."

A telegram from George Romero came one day with the message: "We've got another gig—call me." Savini called. "I was told to start thinking of ways to kill people. It was DAWN OF THE DEAD." Savini hasn't been back to Carnegie Mellon since.

"A third of that movie was improvised," said Savini, who also has a featured role as Blades, the leader of the bike gang that invades the shopping mall. "We'd think of ways to kill people and just do it. The screwdriver effect, for instance, came from my assistant saying, 'Let's drive an umbrella into somebody's ear.'" The result was a janitor zombie who has a screwdriver pulled from his utility belt and driven into his ear (the zombie was played by John Harrison, CREEPSHOW's assistant director).

Two hours after the idea was mentioned to an always-responsive Romero, the effect was filmed in a series of three shots, utilizing identical screwdrivers cut to different lengths, silver painted soda straws and blood tubing. "It's nothing to be proud of," Savini candidly admitted. "I'm just saying that some of this stuff is so easy. You can sit and think for months of how to do that, but sometimes when you're under pressure you come up with your best ideas."

The pressure Savini was under often came in the form of having to turn 300 extras into zombies for a night of filming, which began at 9 p.m. in the Monroeville shopping mall and lasted until seven the next morning, when the mall's Muzak system automatically came on. On busy nights, Savini had as many as eight assistants doing zombies. "They'd do all the gray makeup, and I would do the gory ones, the effects and the stunts. I did the straight makeup, too, until I met Jeannie Jeffries and made her my assistant. She's a much better cosmetologist than I am. I mean, I've created beauty, but I've strayed, as you can tell."

DAWN OF THE DEAD cemented the relationship between Savini and Romero, who allowed the makeup artist an uncommon level of creative input. Savini had a similarly favorable experience with director Sean Cunningham on FRIDAY THE 13TH, a hugely-successful low-budget slasher film that featured such treats as an axe buried in a girl's head and an arrow pinning a character to a tree through his eye.

The incredible success of FRI-

DAY THE 13TH led to a slew of splatter movies, each trying to out-shock the next. Savini's next assignment was William Lustig's MANIAC [10:1:32], which Savini now refers to as "sleaze." Though the film has little in the way of redeeming social value, it does offer some of the most stomach-churning scenes ever filmed, including a scalping and a decapitation.

Savini's grisly effects are brutally realistic, a result, he feels, of having seen the real thing while in Vietnam. "My job was to go in afterwards and photograph the damage," Savini said. "I saw a lot of gore, the way the stuff really looks." As for how his combat memories have affected his work, Savini relates them to internal feelings. "Anybody can take a foam head, chop it up and put blood around it to make it look like it's been blasted by a shotgun. But there's something that gives you this queasy feeling deep down below your stomach, even into your crotch, when it's a real person who was once alive. There's something about it that I hope I've put into what you see. And it's not just the physical damage—it's the expression and the position of the body. It's a feeling that you have about that body."

"People ask me, 'Don't you feel terrible about showing all this grisly stuff?' Well, I grew up watching THE LONE RANGER and shows like that, and when a guy got shot, he went 'Oh!' and fell down. So it wasn't that terrible, it wasn't so ugly to shoot somebody. We all grew up as kids thinking, 'Dying—what's that?' So if you portray death as hideously and as ugly as it really is, it turns you away from the screen and you want to throw up. I thought that was better. But then it got way out of hand. Audiences are now completely desensitized towards violence and that ugliness, and I think that could be a bit dangerous."

Although it was nice for Savini to be recognized as one of the tops in the field of splatter makeup, he was itching to branch out. When Romero directed KNIGHTRIDERS in 1980, Savini willingly put aside his foam latex to play the part of Morgan, the Black Knight—a role written expressly for him by Romero.

Two more splatter movies followed, THE BURNING and THE PROWLER, and then came the break that Savini had long hoped for: an offer by William Friedkin to direct a low-budget suspense thriller. But there was the prospect of CREEPSHOW to consider, and its wide assortment of challenging effects. Then, too, there was the matter of loyalty, and a debt owed to George Romero. Savini chose to



Above: Entomologists Ray Mendez (left) and David Brody scoop up giant cockroaches in a cave in Trinidad. The pair are squatting in bat guano. Local residents hired as porters refused to enter the cave, for obvious reasons.

Creepshow's Giant Roaches

For the ultimate in horror, David Brody and Ray Mendez supervised a cast of thousands.

The final shot of the final story in the CREEPSHOW anthology had to be something big, something gruesome enough to burn into the audiences' memory and spectacular enough to have them tell their friends, "You have to see that last scene."

Stephen King's original ending for "They're Creeping Up On You" had Upon Pratt (E. G. Marshall) retreating to the bathroom of his penthouse apartment in the face of a swarming mass of roaches. The bugs chew their way in and inundate Pratt. Fade out. As the new day breaks, all the bugs are gone, and the apartment appears undisturbed. As the camera closes in on Pratt's face, a single cockroach trundles out of one

of his nostrils.

CREEPSHOW was well into production when King began to have some serious doubts. "I didn't know how we were going to get a big Trinidad cockroach out of a human nostril," King said. "Even using a dummy head, it's tantamount to trying to get all those clowns to come out of a little car. The bug wranglers [David Brody and Ray Mendez] said roaches would squeeze to a degree, but if you tried to squeeze one out of a human nostril, it's going to be crushed. That's when we started to play with some other ideas."

Disgusting as it might be, Romero and King agreed that a single roach just wouldn't be enough to send audiences crawling out of the theater. Romero and King came up with the idea of having hundreds of cockroaches spewing out of Pratt's mouth and other parts of his body. "I suggested that they should come out of his chest," Tom Savini explained, "because the way he's clothed [in a bathrobe] that's the only exposed area."

The effect was staged in two parts. First, air bladders were positioned under E. G. Marshall's bathrobe to make the chest swell, presumably from the presence of cockroaches inside Pratt's body. Savini also designed a bladder appliance in the shape of a cockroach, which was placed on Marshall's forehead. The bladder could be inflated, and blood made to squirt out, giving the impression that a roach was



E. G. Marshall and friends, during an early phase of the infestation. Although Marshall's contract allowed him to use stand-ins for the roach scenes, he did most of them himself.



Filming the explosive climax of "They're Creeping Up On You." Left: Tom Savini and wardrobe supervisor Eileen Mae Sieff fit E. G. Marshall with a series of air bladders to simulate hoards of cockroaches under his robe. Above left: The final assault of the roaches, filmed inside a plexiglass set using a life-size dummy of Marshall. Above right: Ray Mendez holds a syringe full of cockroaches in his position underneath the set, for the gruesome shot in which roaches appear to burst out from E. G. Marshall's mouth and chest.

trying to eat its way out.

But the bulk of the sequence involved a full-size dummy, modeled on a cast of E. G. Marshall's bust and hands. "He was a dream to cast," Savini recalled. "The first thing he said when he came in was, 'Listen, I've had this done before and I hate it.' We thought we were going to have a very hard time with him, but he was the perfect subject."

A foam latex mask was slipped over a fiberglass understructure, and a fitting was placed inside the mouth so that a large plexiglass syringe could be attached from underneath, enabling a deluge of roaches to be pumped out on cue.

For the rest of Marshall's body, a rough cast was made with an expanding, styrofoam-like mixture. When that hardened, a section of the chest was cut out and another syringe fixture was placed underneath, and tissue paper was glued over the hole on top and painted to look like flesh. The life bust was then attached and blended into the chest.

Prior to filming the effect, bug wrangler Ray Mendez handpicked the roaches to be loaded into the syringes. "Generally speaking, I picked adult males in excellent health—guys who were just leaping out of the bucket," Mendez said. "For the mouth, I collected about 200; for the chest about 400 of the little suckers. I needed really high-strung bugs because if you use a roach that isn't really hyper, it would just lay there and look horrible.

"*Blabarus Gigantea*," the species of giant Trinidad cockroach used during the filming of *CREEPSHOW*.

"Furthermore," Mendez continued, "the roaches couldn't sit in the syringe waiting for the go ahead. They give off an alarm pheromone, a chemical way of

screaming for help, and if too much of the pheromone is present it would anesthetize or kill the roaches. We had to load the roaches into the syringes *just* when the cameras were ready to roll; not before."

Mendez worked the syringes from a tight space under the bed in Pratt's bedroom set (see photo, top right), loading the syringes and screwing them into place before each shot. For the mouth, blood was pumped onto the roaches before they were pushed out of the latex head, so they would track blood over Pratt's face. For the chest effect, which required a bit of help underneath the bed from makeup assistant Darryl Ferrucci, blood was pumped to the tissue paper over the chest. The soaked paper easily ripped open when the roaches were pumped through.

The chest effect caused an unforeseen problem: the space under the bed, which was big enough to fit the syringe with the handle pushed all the way in, was *not* big enough for the syringe with the handle out, ready to be pumped.

In a moment of utter frustration, Mendez told Ferrucci: "We're going to do it anyway!"

With that, he wrapped

his hand around the top of the syringe and held it in place (rather than screwing it into the fitting), pushing up on an angle.

"The problem was that I couldn't jiggle the dummy," Mendez said. "If I jiggled it, I'd give away the illusion. So I tried to hold still and not breathe, and then I started to push real slow on the syringe handle. I felt the first roach pop through and I just pushed them through all at once."

For Mendez and Ferrucci, who obviously couldn't see how the effect looked from under the bed, the sudden sound of the crew screaming and applauding was supremely satisfying. When the tumult died down, Savini ecstatically groaned, "That was wooooonnderful!" Another magic trick had worked.

Incidentally, if you're driving through Monroeville and a bit worried about the prospects of thousands of killer Trinidad cockroaches on the loose, relax. At the end of a month of shooting, the roaches were all destroyed with a gas bomb.





JORDY VERRILL's green growth was made from patches of yak hair dyed green and glued directly to Stephen King's hands, face and chest (above). Later stages of the makeup required a full-body suit, designed by Barbara Anderson and worn by Darryl Ferrucci. Left: Special props supervisor Bill Bilowit carefully positions a plastic plant inside a bottle of Ripple that Jordy has been drinking from. Bilowit and his crew experimented for weeks to create the assortment of plants, sprouts and tendrils needed, working with a variety of artificial plants, sea sponges and latex compounds. In addition, several stages of growth were required on most of the key props inside Jordy's farmhouse, including this old-style telephone (sequence, below left).

stay and work in Pittsburgh.

Four months before the start of principal photography, Savini set up his workshop. "I originally asked for a budget of \$150,000 to do all the effects, including my salary," Savini said. Instead, producer Richard Rubinstein offered Savini a straight salary and an unlimited expense account. "I have no idea how much money they spent," Savini said. "I know I bought a mess of stuff, and all I did was turn in my receipts."

Savini hired two assistants: Jessie Nathans and 19-year-old Darryl Ferrucci, who first worked with Savini on *THE BURNING*. Considering the size of the crew, the list of effects called for was staggering: walking corpses; freshly drowned corpses; a ghoulish spectre; decapitations; mutilations; exploding heads; and a furry recreation of the Tasmanian Devil—long on teeth, long on hair and short on good table manners.

Savini and his two assistants began by working on the creature for "The Crate." But they were constantly forced to shift from one effect to another as deadlines came up for the other segments. The workshop was in an almost constant state of organized chaos, with pieces from different makeup effects scattered about the room.

The tools of Savini's trade were everywhere—shelves of foam latex mixes and other solutions, several skeletons (both real and plastic), and hundreds of odds and ends scattered about. Then there are what Savini termed "museum pieces" hanging on the walls: battery operated ray guns, an automatic Polaroid camera and the like, all of which were taken apart by Ferrucci to see what made them tick. Needless to say, they no longer ticked.

"I gave the Polaroid to Darryl to fix," Savini said, "and he stood there and then threw it as hard as he could against the wall."

"Well, it proved to be a hopeless case," claimed Ferrucci, who helped design most of the mechanics for *CREEPSHOW's* makeup effects. "It obviously didn't want to be cured."

"He smashed it against that wall," Savini continued, "and it went 'zzzzt-click, zzzzt-click,' shooting out pictures like crazy. So he put it on the table and smashed it with a hatchet, and it went 'zzzzzzzz!' So I took a hammer and smashed it. I felt like I killed somebody!"

"It was horrible," Ferrucci shuddered. "Tom sat by himself and wouldn't talk for two hours. He skipped lunch."

Ferrucci's mechanical ability was somewhat more apparent during the preparation of the film's first makeup effect, a skeletal spectre that hovers outside little Billy's window, beckoning to the trash can where dear ol' dad has deposited the first edition of the "Creep-

show" comic book. Working with an actual human skeleton, a pile of odds and ends, and model airplane parts, Ferrucci set about the task of bringing the spectre alive. "I had my own ideas of how the mechanisms should be done," Savini explained. "I was always thinking of a simplistic, quick way to do it, but Darryl wanted to do it in a more elaborate, long-lasting way. He built the damn thing so it would last."

Although the spectre was completely mechanical, more often than not, the film's monsters, bloodied bodies and walking corpses were actors in costumes. And more often than not, Ferrucci was the person stuck inside. "He gets to do everything I don't want to," Savini laughed.

In one scene, Ferrucci doubled for Peter Messer (Yarbro) as the victim of a hunting accident in "Father's Day." Savini built a foam latex head packed with blood-filled condoms for a closeup, but Ferrucci was used for the long shot of Yarbro getting thrown back into a pond with the force of the gunshot. While shooting the scene, Ferrucci swallowed some of the stage blood being pumped over his face as he lay in the water. "My throat was sore for days," he recalled.

For the final stage of "Jordy Verrill," Ferrucci wore Barbara Anderson's so-called "green suit," which gave him the appearance of the world's only walking, talking pot plant. Again, Ferrucci had to simulate being blasted in the head with a shotgun. This time, Ferrucci's costume caught fire from the explosive charges used to simulate the gunshot.

But Ferrucci's biggest role—and the film's most impressive makeup effect—was as the man inside "Fluffy," the hungry, whippet-like creature inside "The Crate." Stephen King's screenplay gave only vague clues when it came to describing the creature, identifying only its razor-sharp teeth, glowing golden eyes and giving the impression of a violent ball of fur.

Pittsburgh artist Phil Wilson



created a series of sketches, including monsters styled after insects, werewolves and a sea creature. Savini did a few sketches of his own, as well, depicting a feral, demonic-looking beast, resembling both a werewolf and an ape. When all of the sketches were shown to Romero, King and Rubinstein, Savini's designs were given the okay.

As the creature had to be small enough to reside in the crate (which, in turn, had to be small enough so that one man could be expected to move it by himself), the suit was designed so Ferrucci wore it from the waist up; his legs would be hidden during filming while another person worked the creature's feet from underneath. To design the workings of Fluffy's head, Savini first studied photos of Rob Bottin's cable-controlled ape from *TANYA'S ISLAND*, and then called Bottin up for more details. A fiberglass helmet containing the control mechanisms was custom fitted to Ferrucci, and the foam latex face was attached to the helmet. The teeth were molded from an actual gorilla skull, filed to a sharp point and coated with epoxy for a wet look.

It took as many as eight people to send Fluffy through his paces, including Ferrucci, Debbie Pinthus (who worked the creature's feet) and, at times, director George Romero. "The first time we actually used the facial mechanisms, George was controlling one of the cables," Savini recalled. "It got to a point where he never yelled, 'cut' because we were having so much fun sitting there making the face move! George and I were sitting there like two kids in front of a video game!"

Although Fluffy's attacks in "The Crate" are some of *CREEPSHOW*'s most violent offerings, Romero and Savini consciously avoided typical "splatter" effects. Two of the three attacks—Mike, the janitor (Don Keifer); and Wilma (Adrienne Barbeau)—happen almost completely off-camera. And what *can* be seen was filmed in

a harsh red light, softening the visual impact of the blood while strengthening the comic book-type tension and excitement. "This may sound odd coming from me, but I believe in the value of not showing *everything*," Savini said. "The audience can imagine far worse than we can create sometimes."

The attack on grad student Charlie Gerson (Robert Harper) is the most graphic in the segment: a chunk of his shoulder is torn off, the back of his neck is bitten, and a claw is dragged across his face. The effects were all pre-applied wounds that were hidden either by latex appliances or by Fluffy's slashing claw itself. Careful timing and use of camera angles—coupled with effective sound effects—creates the illusion of a man being torn apart.

Early in the film's production, associate producer David Vogel told Savini: "If you accomplish all this with just Darryl and Jessie working for you, then you've really accomplished something."

"It's true," Savini agreed. "We accomplished *miracles* with just three people. If I had asked for more people early on, I could have had them. I think my idea was to save money, because if I could do it cheaply, then that's a good recommendation for me.

"Now that it's done, I'm able to appreciate more what we did. At the time we weren't looking at the work and saying, 'Wow, that's good.' We were just getting it done, and my immediate feeling was, 'Boy, we blew it, because it's not what we could have done.' I realize now that that's how anybody feels about their own work. I reflect now on how I acted during the whole shooting, and how at some points, the stress got to be so much that I was actually taking it out on people. I could have been more of a teacher to Jessie and Darryl, instead of assuming that they knew everything. I didn't have time, I guess—I was so caught up in getting the work done. We talk about all this stuff now, and they understand. We're people again now, and we're friends."



Darryl Ferrucci, shown here working on the cable-controlled Spectre, served as Tom Savini's right-hand man during the production of *CREEPSHOW*.

P rincipal photography of *CREEPSHOW* took 17 weeks, wrapping in late November. Although the pace had been relatively relaxed during the first unit shooting, the level of activity quickened somewhat in postproduction. The amount of optical work, sound editing and composing required was far more than in any previous Romero film.

Four different editors worked to put the five stories together: Romero cut the prologue, epilogue and "Something To Tide You Over"; local filmmaker Pat Bubac cut "The Lonesome Death of Jordy Verrill"; Oscar-winner Paul Hirsch (*STAR WARS*) worked on "The Crate"; and Michael Spolan—the on-set editor during production—cut "Father's Day" and "They're Creeping Up On You." Although the individual stories have distinctive styles, Spolan felt that the distribution of editing chores added little to the diversity. "It's built in," said Spolan, who met Romero while working on the promotional campaign for *DAWN OF THE DEAD*. "Even if I had cut *all* of them, they would still look differently."

Spolan found that Romero's technique for covering sequences gave him a lot of leeway in assem-

bling the footage. "George is an editor, so he shoots in a way that you're never really trapped," Spolan said. "There's always a way out; even to make major structural changes."

Romero doesn't like to lock himself in too closely with the shooting script, and only storyboards effects shots. "I like to be able to change my mind," Romero said. "Sometimes things get overly-planned and everyone gets programmed in a certain direction. To change an angle throws the whole banana into a tizzy.

"I'll write a shooting script that says, 'Closeup Henry, closeup Wilma, and a two-shot of them at the crate.'" Romero continued. "At the time, that seems like the way I'm going to want to cut that. I'll shoot the closeup of Henry and the closeup of Wilma. But if I have time, I'll shoot the closeup for the *whole* scene, the two-shot for the *whole* scene, and the wide shot for the *whole* scene and leave as many of those options open as possible. If we get a better take on a certain line on a master, rather than in the two-shot, I want to be able to use it."

Romero has said that he has actually frightened himself while editing his earlier films, like a writer at work on a horror novel. For Spolan, those moments came while



ADRIENNE BARBEAU actually dies twice in "The Crate," once at the hands (and teeth) of a ravenous beast, and once in Hal Holbrook's dreams—Holbrook fantasizes blowing her brains out during a lawn party as she brays her obnoxious laughter. Far Left: Savini smiles for the camera as he and Darryl Ferrucci load a syringe with stage blood. Middle Left: Savini affixes a thin appliance to Barbeau's forehead, with tubing for air and blood. A "bullet hole" in the middle of the appliance was plugged with a piece of plastic flesh. Near Left: To film the shot, Savini used compressed air to blow out the plastic plug, while Ferrucci pumped the blood. Savini also rigged squibs on the back of Barbeau's head to splatter the tree. Barbeau was so involved with her dialogue that she didn't hear the cue for the shot, and was caught off guard. Her startled expression is genuine.

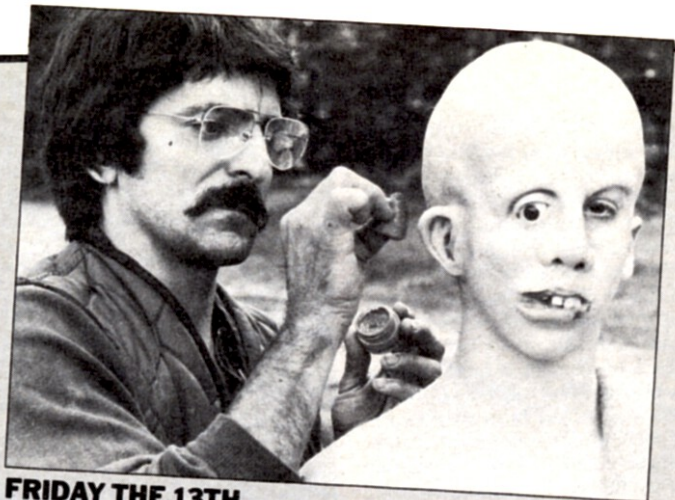
A Tom Savini Portfolio

A few of the reasons he's called "The King of Splatter Makeup."

In real life, Tom Savini is a quiet, sensitive, good-looking guy—something of a ladies man, in fact. But in *real* life, Savini is a butcher, leaving a trail of blood (Kayro syrup) and guts (foam latex) wherever he works.

Although Savini had supplied the makeup effects for several previous films, it was his work on Romero's *DAWN OF THE DEAD* that brought him recognition. Even the crew realized that what Savini was doing was something out of the ordinary. Early in the production schedule, Nick Mastandrea, a grip, approached Savini for his autograph. "You're gonna be a star," he told the flattered makeup artist. Mastandrea was right.

Savini's makeup effects not only shocked audiences, they occasionally bordered on the disgusting. But what grosses Savini out? Surprisingly, a great deal. In addition to his phobia about cockroaches (de-



FRIDAY THE 13TH

scribed in the main story), Savini dreads having to touch the animal offal that often doubles for human guts. When *DAWN OF THE DEAD* required the zombies to rip into a man's chest, Savini convinced a friend to pack the animal guts into the foam-latex chest piece. "I didn't want to have anything to do with them," Savini recalled. "I never even touched the box they were in!"

Savini's subsequent assignments—*MANIAC*, *FRIDAY THE 13TH*, *THE PROWLER* and *THE BURNING*—lacked the depth and skill of Romero's direction. Although Savini's work improved with each picture—due to, in large part, his association with makeup doyen Dick Smith, who graciously provided recipes for foam latex, stage blood and other trade secrets—the films were a step down for him, thin stories that relied on his

ability to terrorize an audience.

Eventually, Savini got tired of the type of film he had helped to popularize, preferring the challenge of creating monsters, as in *CREEPSHOW*, or using his acting and stunt experience, as in Romero's *KNIGHTRIDERS*.

His current goals include getting another shot at directing—he turned down a job for producer William Friedkin to accept the *CREEPSHOW* assignment—and to continue his fledgling acting career. Savini hopes he has graduated from mere blood and gore.

"I turned down the last 'splatter' script I got," he explained. "It was called *BLIND DATE*. This guy pushes someone's head into a Cuisinart. A girl goes into the shower and it comes out acid. Unbelievable stuff that nobody would accept. It was so stupid."



PERSONAL TEST MAKEUP

MANIAC



DAWN OF THE DEAD



THE BURNING

working late at night, cutting together the scenes of cockroaches on the march.

"After a while, I was even seeing little shadows out of the corner of my eye in the dark cutting rooms," said Spolan. "To make matters worse, the mischievous Tom Savini was often at large. "He would silently come up behind me and light some flash paper behind my back," Spolan recalled. "Or all of a sudden, Fluffy's head would appear in the window! Those are the fun moments at four in the morning!"

One of Spolan's biggest problems, other than Savini's late-night pranks, was the episodic nature of *CREEPSHOW*. "Getting five stories to have the kind of pace and flow that you feel an audience will sit through—five start-ups, five middles and five endings—was a challenge," he said. "It's also hard to tell a story that makes sense in a very short amount of time. You don't have time for a lot of character development. A lot of stuff has to be in the acting and in the whole ambience."

While Spolan and the other editors were responsible for making each of the segments work as individual, coherent stories, the task of linking them into a unified whole fell largely on the shoulders of animator Rick Catzone and John Harrison, who wrote the score (in addition to his duties as first assistant director).

Harrison is a native of Pittsburgh, with extensive experience in filmmaking, drama and music. After his graduation from Carnegie Mellon in 1973, he teamed up with friends and classmates to form Image Works, an independent production company. "We eventually came in contact with George Romero," Harrison explained. "The film community in Pittsburgh is not that big. All of us worked indirectly on *MARTIN* and *DAWN OF THE DEAD*."

MARTIN was inspirational to Image Works, and Harrison and his partners (including editor Pat Buba) decided to make their own 16mm feature, *EFFECTS* [10:1:12], for which Harrison started, co-produced and wrote the score. Following a small role in *KNIGHTRIDERS*, Romero asked Harrison to develop a script, based on an idea he was too busy to pursue himself. After delivering the script, Harrison stuck around, eventually becoming *CREEPSHOW*'s assistant director. At the time, Romero was planning on scoring the film with music from the Capitol library—the same source he used for *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*.

"George felt that the library music, which includes classic horror material, would work well stylistically for *CREEPSHOW*," said Harrison, who offered to use his experience with sophisticated synthesizers to "goose up" the library

music if not up to today's audio standards. "They got the tapes in, and there was a wide disparity between material composed in the '50s, '60s and '70s. It was really noticeable, and that worried Romero. One thing led to another, and he said that we might need a couple of little themes that might work as segues between the stories, and an overall theme." Eventually, Harrison wrote about three-fourths of the music in the film, which he performed on a synthesizer.

As had been done with the editing, each of the stories was scored separately, then linked together later. "I took a statement of the music that ends each segment," he explained. "I would work a piece of it so that it feels like it never ends, but goes through a kind of metamorphosis into the music of the next segment."

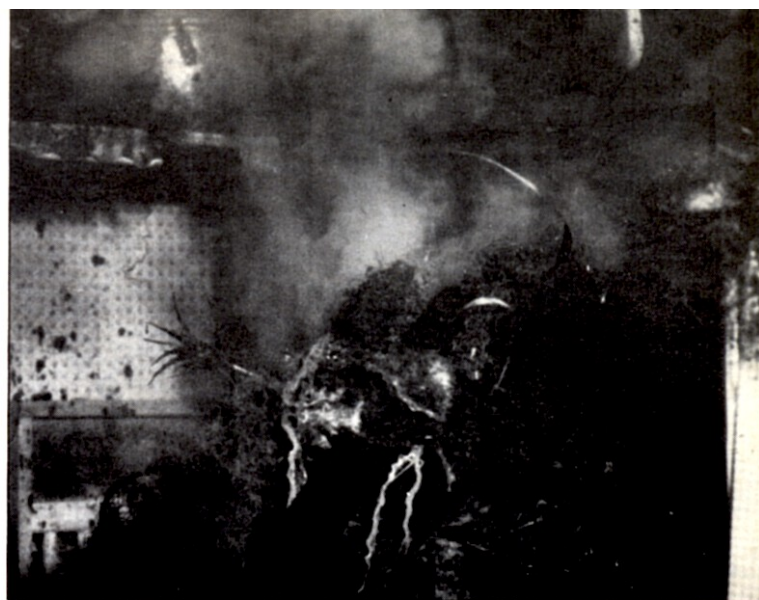
These short segues were matched with a complicated bit of animation supplied by Rick Catizone, who was contacted late in the production schedule when live-action photography of the comic book turning in the wind proved inadequate. Catizone's background in professional animation dates to 1965, when he began with a Pittsburgh group appropriately called The Animators (who supplied the titles for NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD). Catizone was into cel and puppet animation by 1970, and ten years later formed his own company, Anivision, which specializes in stop-motion animation for television commercials. In addition to his animation chores, Catizone worked with Tom Savini on the sculpting for Fluffy, as well as supplying a stop-motion hand for a sequence in "Sometime To Tide You Over" that was later scrapped.

To provide the necessary linking elements for the stories, Catizone had to skillfully blend together live action photography, comic book pages drawn by E. C. veteran Jack Kamen, and cel animation of the spectre that matched Tom Savini's full-scale puppet. Under Catizone's direction, and working with an optical house in New York, the Anivision crew had to take the live-action photography that ended each segment, transform it into the last panel of a story in the "Creepshow" comic book, show the pages blowing in the wind, zoom in on the opening "splash page" of the next story in the comic book, and dissolve back into the live-action.

To show the pages turning, Catizone first assembled Kamen's drawings and the humorous advertisements that had been created for the "Creepshow" comic, and transformed them into a full-size, hand-colored mock-up. The comic book was animated as if it were a stop-motion model, using a locked-down 35mm still camera. The resulting photos were blown up to the correct size, cut out, and mounted on animation cels and



Left: Barbara Anderson poses with the six-foot-tall plant costume she designed for Darryl Ferrucci in "The Lonesome Death of Jordy Verrill." Right: At the conclusion of the segment, Jordy ends his torture by shooting himself with a shotgun. The costume, rigged with explosives for the effect, accidentally caught fire, with Ferrucci still wearing it from the neck down.



re-photographed over watercolor backgrounds drawn by Phil Wilson.

Though the technique seems a bit cumbersome, it was easier than trying to recreate the comic pages by painting individual cels. "When you're working with a field 12 inches across, the size of each page is maybe three to four inches across," Catizone said. "I knew we wouldn't be able to go in and do that kind of detail by hand." Catizone was also racing the clock: he didn't get all the material he needed until about three weeks before the animation was due.

Anivision also worked on the lead-ins to the main and end credits, featuring cel animation of the spectre and backgrounds of nighttime blue, with details, such as the trash can, done in colored pencil. "We just did highlights on the edges that would have been hit by the moonlight," Catizone explained. "That was done so that we could get some separation from the spectre. I didn't want to do cel colors on the background, and give it as important an intensity as the spectre."

Catizone had hoped to do more intricate, comic-style backgrounds, and a more realistic blurring on the edges of the comic book as its pages flipped, but was hampered by the short deadlines. "I don't want to say that a lot of this was an afterthought," Catizone said, "but it could have been started a lot earlier in the production. If I had been approached at the beginning of the film, there's almost no limit to what could have been done."

In contrast, CREEPSHOW's optical effects were planned and discussed prior to the start of principal photography. Dave Stipes and Pittsburgh native Dave Garber—both effects alumni of BATTLESTAR GALACTICA and BUCK ROGERS—first met with Romero and associate producer David Vogel after Garber casually stopped by Laurel's offices to say hello.

"Originally, we began talking about THE STAND," said Garber. "As we were talking, it became apparent he had CREEPSHOW ready to go, and we began discussing the types of shots that we could work on." Ultimately, Garber and Stipes were responsible for more than a dozen effects shots and matte paintings, contributing at least one shot to each segment.

In "The Crate," for example, they were responsible for the shot where Hal Holbrook tosses the crate into a deep quarry. Cletus Anderson had designed a small styrofoam section of cliff face, about eight feet wide, which was positioned at the top of a steep hill behind the Penn Hall Academy. The remainder of the cliff was a matte painting by Dan Curry; the water was a separate element.

"We built a 16-foot-wide 'lake' on the stage in Los Angeles," said Stipes, who functioned as the effects supervisor for the CREEPSHOW work. Taking care to duplicate the angle and height of the location footage, objects were dropped into the water to simulate the crate. "We also ran hoses in and made bubbles. We shot a bunch of high-speed stuff of that. Holbrook pushes the crate over and you see it fall down in front, then we cut to a closeup of the crate hitting the water. We cut back, and you see him looking at the water with all this bubbling coming up. It worked out real well."

Work for other segments included an eerie moon-lit night sky for "Father's Day," painted by Sean Joyce; day and night shots of Leslie Nielsen's beach house for "Something To Tide You Over," also by Joyce; and shots of the blacked-out New York skyline for "They're Creeping Up On You," a complex combination of still photographs, matte paintings and back-lit animation effects.

"We had pretty much finished most of the work when they decided

they'd like to have this skyline shot," Stipes recalled. "A photographer went to Richard Rubinstein's New York apartment and shot about 20 8"x10" transparencies over the course of two hours, from just before dusk to night. Sean Young painted a sky, and I painted lightning flashes. We shot the transparency on the animation stand with holdout mattes, then we shot the sky on our matte camera. We then burned in the highlight flashes of the clouds all lit up, and then, where we wanted to, we went back again and burned in the lightning bolts. I was sort of amazed at how involved it got!"

However, the film's most complicated optical effects were required for "The Lonesome Death of Jordy Verrill," [see sidebar, page 35]. Stipes and Garber delivered at least six matte paintings—including one by Jim Danforth—and footage of a meteor streaking overhead and crashing behind a small hill, an animated effect by Ernie Farino.

Unlike almost every other phase of the production, the bulk of the effects work was completed in Los Angeles. Despite the potential for long-distance misunderstandings, both Stipes and Garber said they were just a bit surprised at how well everything worked out. "I had hoped that we didn't give the impression that we were 'hotshots' from Hollywood," said Stipes, whose time on location was limited to a few days here and there. "It would have been nice to have had more participation in the project."

Added Garber: "I was surprised to the extent everything was organized—it was much more thorough than a lot of Hollywood productions. Especially the location work in New Jersey [shooting plates for "Something To Tide You Over"]. It was really a prepared assault. Dave and I have worked on lots of productions and locations, and in total, this was, by far, the best experience we've had."



Composer John Harrison, who doubled as the film's first assistant director.

CREEPSHOW premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in May to overwhelming success. Not only was the film sold off to a number of foreign markets, but a glowing review published in *Variety* generated the type of positive word-of-mouth that money can't buy:

"CREEPSHOW feels like a real labor of love and Romero produces more genuine startling effects than anyone in recent years.

"The film is top of its class and should generate substantial box office business. A surefire picture for the summer horror crowd."

UFD knew the box office potential of the film was strong, and had always considered the possibility of selling it off to a larger distributor. The *Variety* review is almost certain to have helped cinch the deal that sent the film to Warner Bros, giving Laurel the best of both worlds: complete artistic control during production, and the strength of a major distributor. To accommodate the development of a marketing campaign, Warners has

pushed the release back to October 29, Halloween weekend. In the meantime, Romero is doing a bit of additional editing, tightening up the narrative and bringing the film closer to a two-hour running time (the premier ran 129 minutes).

Following Cannes, Romero held an invitation-only screening in New York for the cast and crew. According to bug-wrangler Ray Mendez, when the lights came up, "Romero just sat there with this great, big 'I gotcha!' smile." Previews with general audiences have also reportedly gone well.

"I feel really good about the film," said Stephen King, who admits his may not be the most objective viewpoint available. "I don't completely trust my own judgements yet, mostly because I imagine that everyone went out after seeing MYRA BRECKINRIDGE cut together and said, 'We've got the greatest film of all time, boys.'"

In the wake of his involvement with CREEPSHOW, King has remained as prolific as ever. His adaptation of CUJO, a dark tale of horror starring a 200-pound rabid Saint Bernard, is set for production this fall by Taft International, the folks behind THE BOOGENS. "They want to do it low budget [\$4 million], and they want to do it fast, and that sounds good to me," King said. Other film projects based on King's material—though not with his screenplays—include FIRE-STARTER, slated by Universal as John Carpenter's next film, with a screenplay by Bill Lancaster (THE THING); and THE DEADZONE, now in the hands of Dino De Laurentiis, who commissioned King to write a script, but rejected it.

In the literary world, King's star continues to shine brightly. Current publishing plans include: *Different Seasons*, a collection of four novellas to be published by

Viking in the fall; *The Talisman*, a collaborative effort with Peter Straub; *Christine*, a horror novel about teenagers, rock music and cars; *The Gunslinger*, the first set of five stories in an ongoing work entitled *The Dark Tower*; and *It*, a mammoth novel that King promises will pull out all the stops.

King's extended stay in Monroeville during CREEPSHOW's production has resulted in yet another novel, inspired by the view from his apartment of the shopping mall at which DAWN OF THE DEAD was filmed. Although it's too early to reveal too much of the plot, it's safe to say that King was fascinated by the same aspects of consumerism that Romero was. "I've been married almost 12 years, and this is the first time I've ever spent any significant amount of time by myself," said King, relaxing in his Monroeville apartment, eating a TV dinner and sipping a beer. "It contributed to the mind set—you know, the sense that this place is cut off."

Further down the road, Doubleday will publish *Pet Sematery* [sic], a grim story dealing with a man's attempt to bring a dead son back to life. And King has plans for a sequel to *Salems Lot*. "I'd like to do it, but you tell me when I'm going to have the time," he laughed. And, of course, there is THE STAND, whose epic requirements spawned CREEPSHOW more than two years ago.

Plans for the film are up in the air—if the financing can be obtained, it might be Romero's next project. But neither Romero nor King are sure what form the film may take. King's second draft called for two two-hour movies. A third draft now in the works would be for a single, three-hour film. Costs for the project, in either form, are estimated to be at least \$15 to \$25 million.

"I can't even speculate as to how we might go about it," said Romero. "I'd love to take a company of people and travel, doing all the location stuff, and then have a situation something like CREEPSHOW, with a space where we could build all the sets. I think it would be fun to go on the road and actually shoot it in all the places in the novel." King's tale of the survivors of a superflu, who wage the ultimate battle of good and evil, is set across the entire continent.

If financing for THE STAND proves trickier than now hoped, Laurel has a number of other, less costly projects in the pipeline, including DAY OF THE DEAD and INVASION OF THE SPAGHETTI MONSTERS. Romero also has plans to shoot an experimental film with a revolutionary 3D process owned by UFD, which uses twin strips of 70mm film and is said to produce remarkable results. "The purpose is to find out how this process affects production," Romero said. "How much more time we have to put in and how much it's going to cost, and stuff like that."

In addition, Laurel owns the rights to *Mayday*, a novel by Thomas Block. "It's about zombies on an airplane!" Romero laughed. The story details a supersonic airliner that is accidentally pierced with an unarmed, heat-seeking missile being tested by the Navy. The plane doesn't explode, but it does decompress. The pilot manages to set the automatic pilot for an altitude where there's a breathable atmosphere, but by the time the plane gets there, almost everyone on board is brain damaged. "The Navy wants to shoot the plane down, and the insurance company doesn't want it to land either—they'd rather have 350 dead people than 350 zombies!" Romero said. "It's hard to get a good airplane movie going after AIRPLANE, but this is really solid."

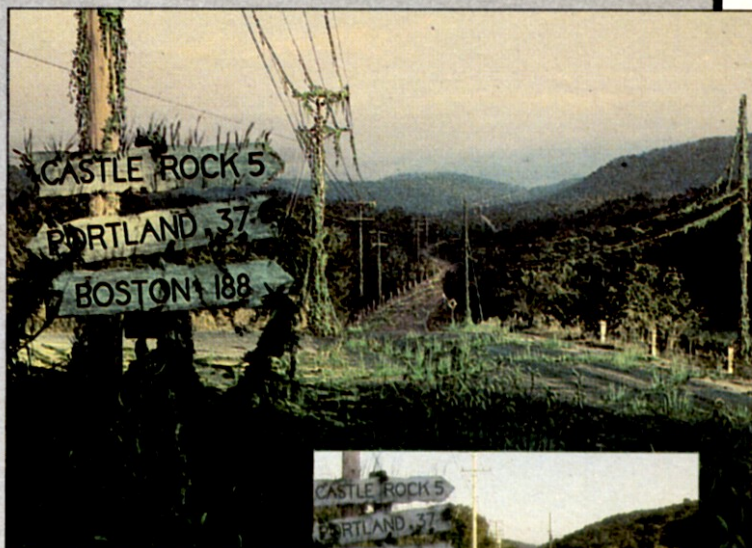
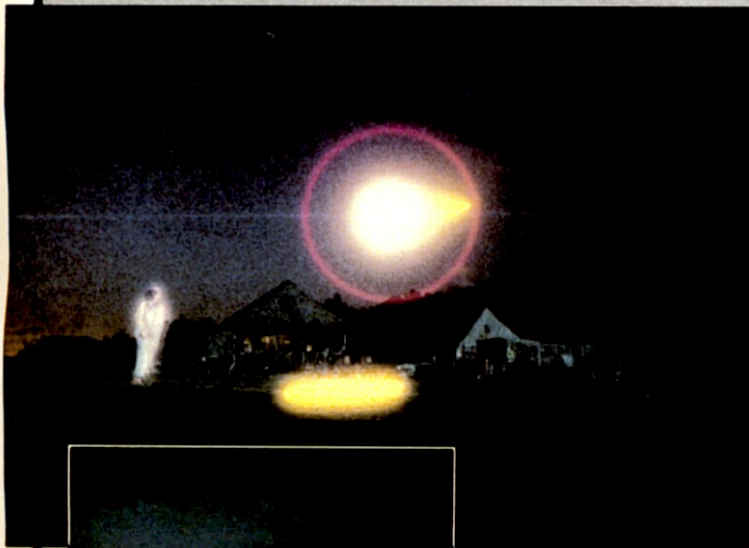
Romero and key crew members were in Los Angeles in July, finishing the sound mix on the slightly leaner version of CREEPSHOW that Warner Bros will release Halloween weekend. Romero knows that even with the studio's distribution muscle, the film is a gamble: mixing humor and horror is a difficult sport at best, and horror films—with the exception of POLTERGEIST—haven't fared that well at the box office lately. But reactions to the completed film are promising.

Stephen King, for one, proudly points to CREEPSHOW as an indication that fun horror films—as opposed to grim, depressing tales of death and mayhem—are finally coming back. "It's like the proverbial roller-coaster ride, where you laugh and you scream, and it doesn't leave a bad taste in your mouth," he said. "You just feel like, 'Wow, that was great! Let's go do it again!'" □

Right: Bug wrangler Ray Mendez (right, with bucket of roaches) sets up a shot of bugs crawling up Upton Pratt's legs. Since E. G. Marshall's face would not be seen, a stand-in was used (far left). Below: Marshall and Romero rehearse a shot.



PHOTO/RAYMOND A. MENDEZ



Two optical effects for "The Lonesome Death of Jordy Verrill." Above Left: The meteor flies over Jordy's head, featuring cel animation by Ernie Farino over night footage taken on location (inset). Above Right: The weeds growing towards town, a Jim Danforth matte painting. Production designer Cletus Anderson positioned artificial plants at varying distances from the camera to act as reference points for the diminishing scale (inset).

Postproduction Optical Effects

Dave Stipes and Dave Garber add a pinch to each segment.

To handle CREEPSHOW's matte work and optical chores, George Romero went with a Pittsburgh native, Dave Garber, and his associate, David Stipes, who had met while working at Universal's Hartland special effects facility.

Working for several months in between other assignments, Stipes, Garber and a small crew delivered at least a dozen effects shots for the film. Nearly half of the effects were earmarked for the "Jordy Verrill" segment, including animation of the meteor flying overhead and crashing behind a small hill, and several matte paintings that showed the extent of the plant growth, extending and enhancing the artificial plants constructed by the prop department.

Production designer Cletus Anderson placed samples of the plants at various distances from the camera to act as a reference guide for scale and coloration. The live-

action plates were rear-projected, and the mattes painted on large sheets of glass, so the camera would photograph both at once. With the exception of the painting shown top right, the mattes were executed by Janet Kusnick.

"Those shots were really crazy," said Stipes, "because the greens on the background plates were just so intense. When it was being photographed, Mike Gornick had used extra green lights, so the plants had this unworldly glow. We were having trouble trying to get the plants green enough in our painting. We finally lit our matte paintings through green gels to get the paint green enough. We'd have to feather in the green light to the painted grass, then go to unfiltered white light to blend the mountain and sky."

"It got to be a real challenge trying to put it all together," Stipes added. "The Kodak negative film we used

has a hard time reproducing greens off of paint or a process plate. The film is oriented towards people—warm tones and flesh tones."

The glowing meteor was originally built as a model and photographed on motion-control equipment, but Ernie Farino's bottom-lit animation, designed to enhance the model, was deemed so successful that it was used alone. To give the feeling that the meteor was actually flying overhead, Farino added ground glows, lens flares



David Stipes photographs a multiplane matte of the moon and clouds.

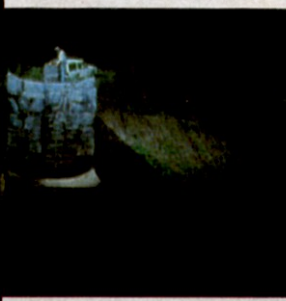
and other optical imperfections that result from live-action photography.

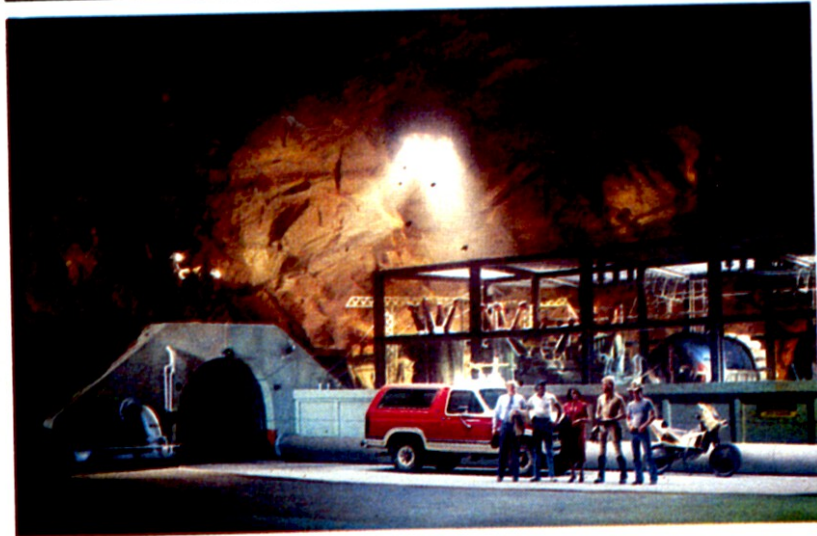
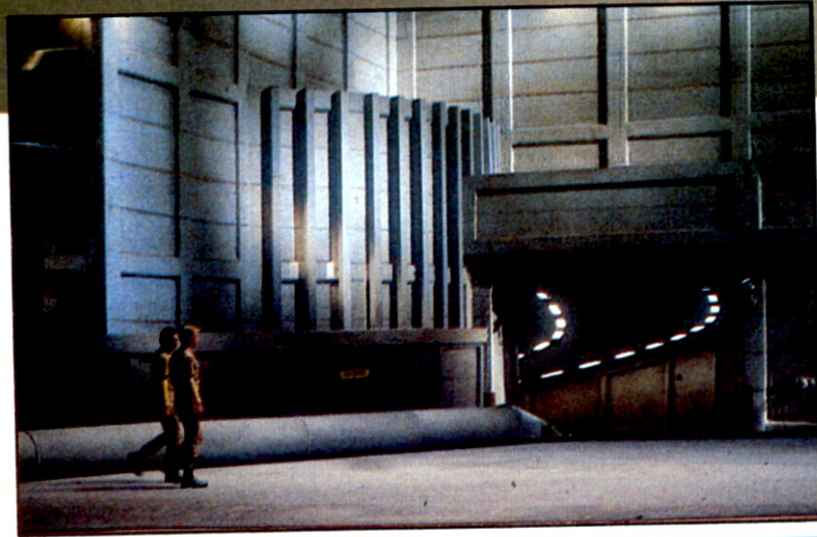
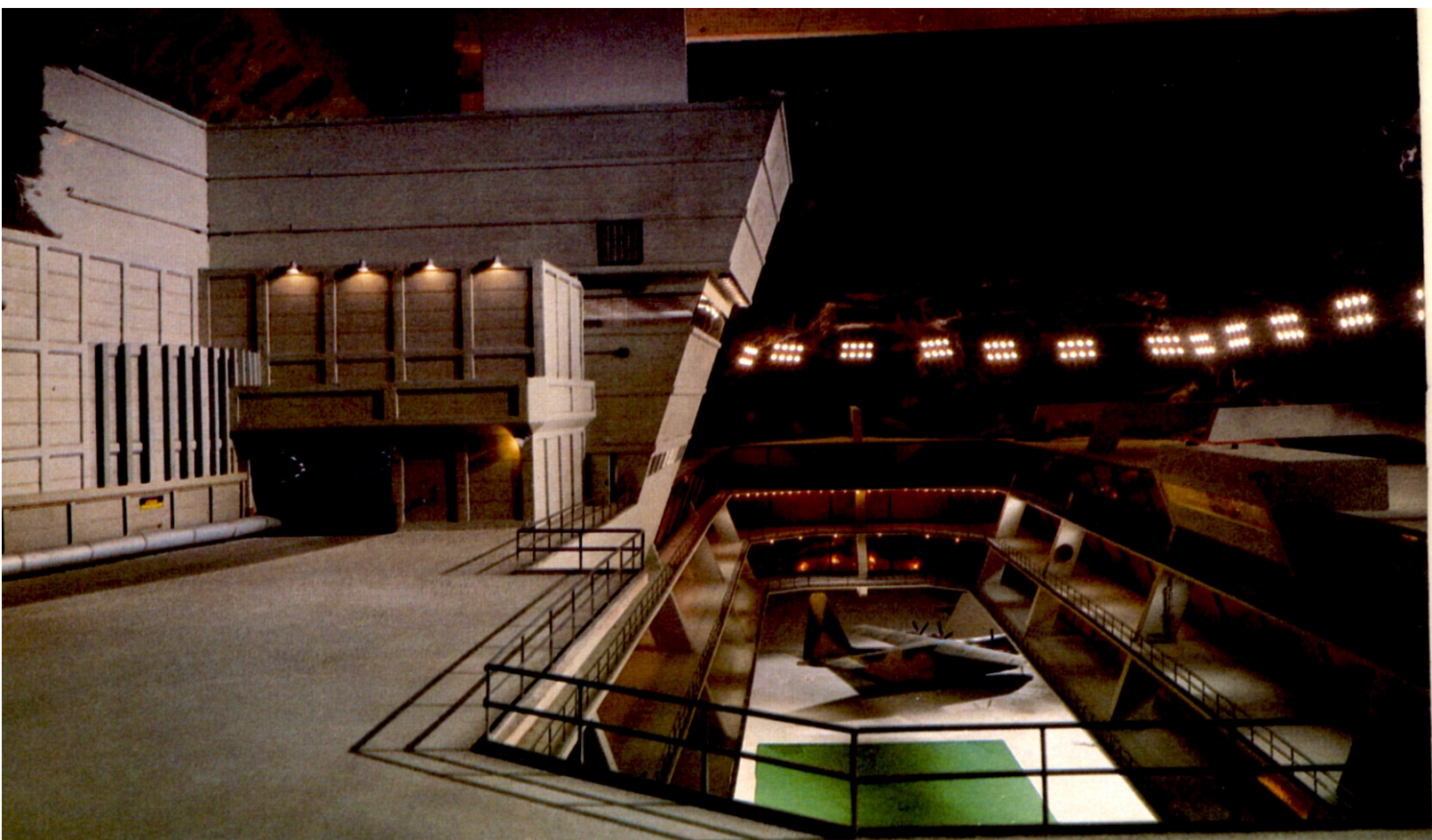
Like most of their work for CREEPSHOW, the "Jordy Verrill" effects were based on background plates shot by Stipes and Garber on location. But one shot—an eerie moon for "Father's Day"—was created entirely in the studio. "It was just a cutaway, sort of a Halloween moon with clouds," said Stipes. "It was a neat multiplane shot, and particularly fun to do because we got a chance to do multiple splits across the sky, three different speeds of clouds and a back-lit moon."

Unlike some productions—where the effects suppliers complain of being rushed, ill-prepared and poorly treated—CREEPSHOW left Stipes and Garber feeling good about their work. "Romero extended to us the same kind of courtesy that he takes with his live action crew," Stipes said.

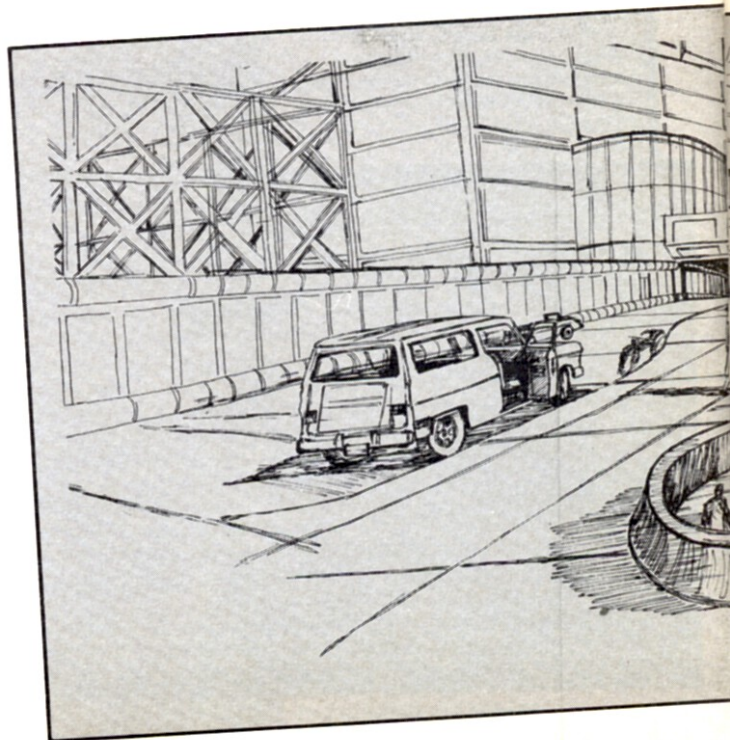


Left: Hal Holbrook tosses The Crate into a deep rock quarry, a composite of rear-projected live action, matte painting and miniature water reflections. The use of postproduction opticals required that only a minimal set be built (inset).





MEGAFORCE, Introvision's latest feature film assignment, called for the creation of a vast, underground military complex. Introvision constructed the complex in miniature (above), from which photographic plates were made at whatever camera angles were desired for front projection work needed to combine live actors with the miniature set. "Megaforce" technicians are shown (inset) walking in a front projection plate, a closeup of the lower left of the model shown above. Another angle (bottom left), shows "Megaforce" leader Barry Bostwick and his group as they arrive in the underground complex. A sketch by Introvision art director Tim Donahue (below), shows the original design for the sequence, which was scaled down considerably. Rear projection was used for long shots in which live action had to be inserted at several different model locations.



INTROVISION

It's the proverbial "better mousetrap" of special effects, but the filmmaking world has yet to beat a path to its door.

by Stephen Rebello

Those who have seen it work say the reaction for everyone is the same. First they look through the lens of the camera, then they give a startled look at the stage, then they stare into the lens again and shake their heads in disbelief.

That's Introvision, the hot new special effects technique that is trying to break its way into the feature film market. When Introvision made its official big-screen debut in the summer of 1981, with its work showcased in The Ladd Company's *OUTLAND*, industry insiders trotted out superlatives for the system and its potential. Comments ranged from envisioning Introvision as one of the industry's bright hopes for financial salvation, to dubbing it *the* hottest technological "new kid in town" since Jolson talked.

When *OUTLAND* fizzled at the boxoffice, the euphoria died down. And Introvision humbly went to work on commercials and television shows waiting for the next big feature to establish its credentials.

Ironically, Introvision's next feature assignment, this summer's *MEGAFORCE*, has also been a commercial and critical disaster.

Despite this string of bad luck, interest in Hollywood in Introvision as a new and basic production tool still runs high. That's because—boxoffice failures aside—Introvision works.

The technology of the system involves the use of still photographs, glass paintings or film footage, projected onto a 31½-foot by 60-foot Scotchlite screen to create a fully workable, three-dimensional appearing "set." The system creates the illusion that actors, performing in front of the screen, are moving *inside* the projected picture—a neat trick that gives the system its name as well as differentiates it from normal front projection.

With its ability to provide settings which can't be traveled to or built within a reasonable cost, Introvision is particularly ripe for exploitation by fantasy and science fiction filmmakers. Introvision is limited only by the imagination of those who use it. Obviously, up to now, the system's potential hasn't been scratched.

The system was developed by John Eppolito, whose frustration in attempting to launch a weekly fantasy TV series for children during the early '70s kicked off the

tinkering that eventually evolved into Introvision. The tremendous cost of building Oz-like sets for the series moved Eppolito to seek economical solutions. He picked the collective brains of special effects innovators like Ned Mann and Norman Dawn, among others; enlisted the aid of USC film student Les Robey; eked out studio space from industry friends; and generally rolled up his sleeves for the challenge.

Soon Eppolito, a former magician with show business roots as far back as vaudeville, found himself with a wealth of knowledge in a field that was not his speciality.

The big breakthrough came, in classic Hollywood fashion, on a Gotham studio soundstage at midnight. Still photographer Alan Jackson peered through the camera lens and saw Eppolito standing alongside Judy Garland on the yellow brick road. "We were ecstatic," Eppolito recalled, "giggling like a bunch of kids. That wasn't Introvision, but it was proof that you could put someone into a picture. Today's system evolved from that crazy little experiment."

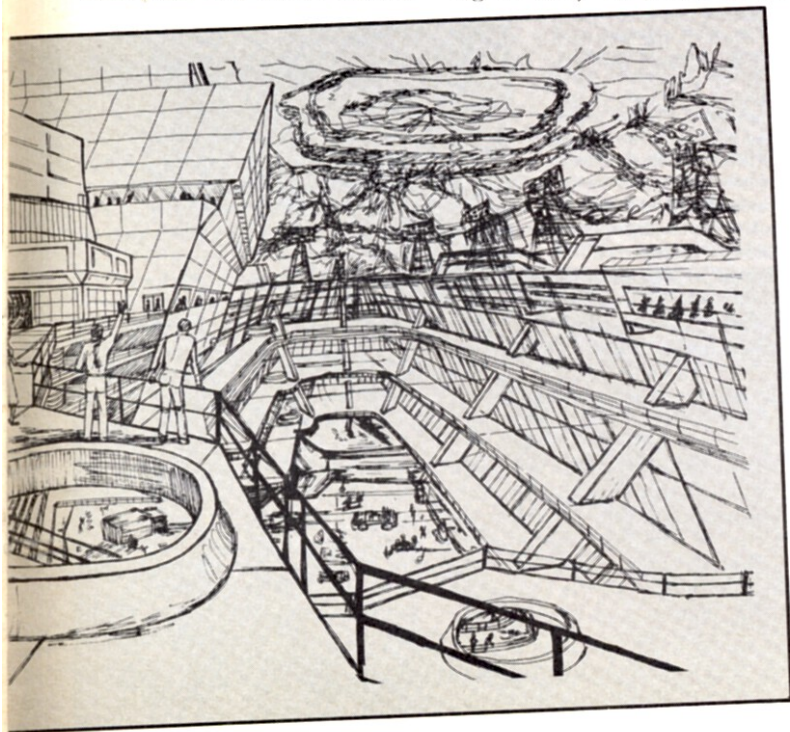
Seed money for the development of Introvision was provided by show business veteran Tom Naud,

who now runs the company. Eppolito resigned from active participation with Introvision in April, shortly before the release of *MEGAFORCE*, over creative differences, and remains a silent partner in the operation.

"The irony is" adds inventor Eppolito, "we never *did* do that children's series."

Everyone involved with Introvision is mum on the subject of how the system works. The secrecy, no doubt, is fueled by the denial of patent rights for the system to the Introvision company. If filmmakers can find out how to do it themselves, why hire Introvision? That logic was not lost on Derek Meddings, the effects supervisor of Columbia's "mega-buck" science fantasy epic *KRULL*. After Columbia actively considered Introvision for work on *KRULL*, carefully exploring the system's capabilities, Meddings vetoed the idea and decided to use his own brand of front projection.

"Probably the best way to explain what we do without giving away the show, is to tell you what you would have seen at Pinewood while we filmed our part of *OUTLAND*," said Eppolito. "Our system is four feet by five feet, weighs



General manager Tom Naud



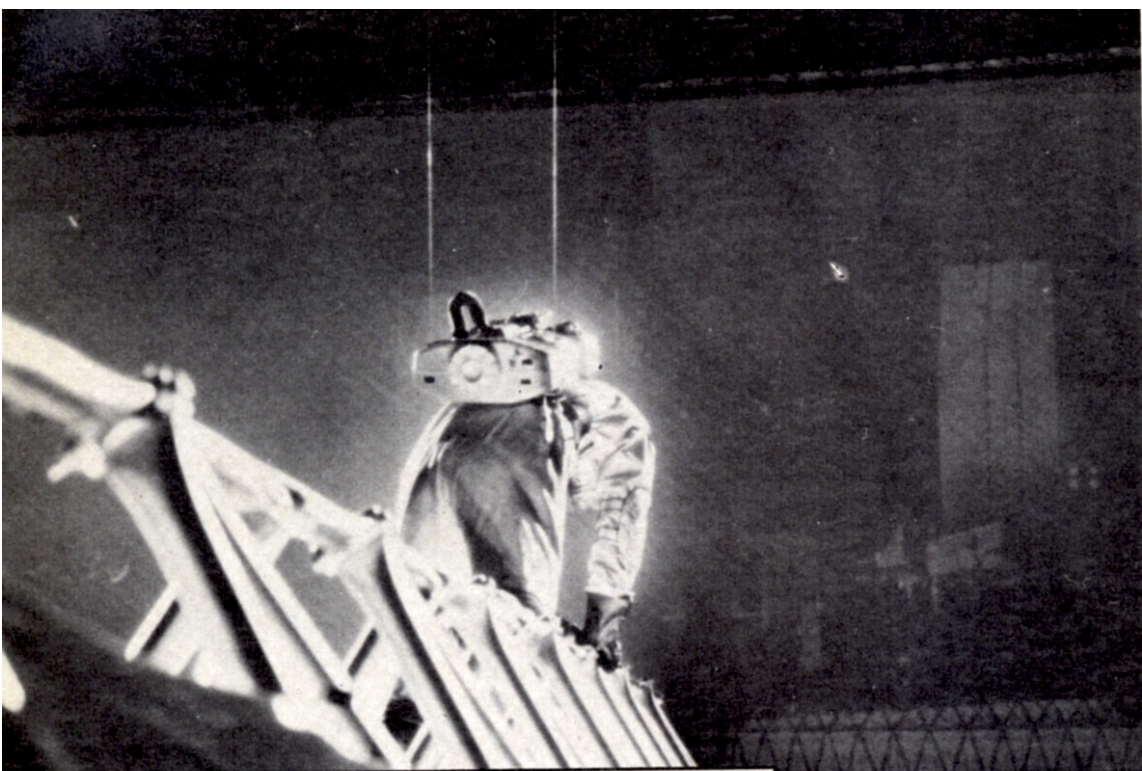
Inventor John Eppolito



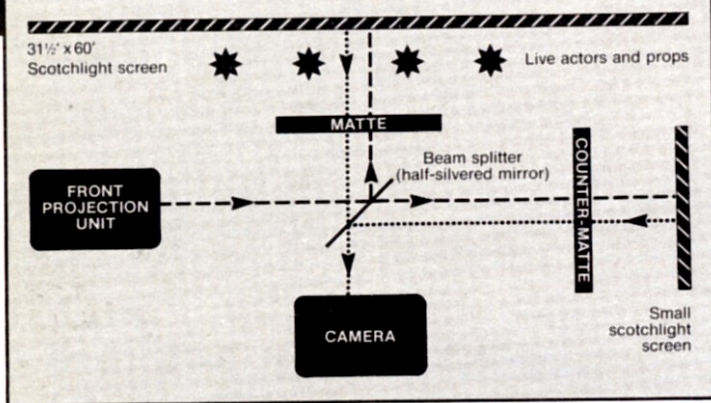
Cinematographer Bill Mesa



Art director Tim Donahue



THE INTROVISION SYSTEM



Filming Introvision for **OUTLAND** (top), a stunt man and prop are positioned in front of the system's large Scotchlite screen. The screen image is barely visible to onlookers from most angles other than through the camera. The system (inset) is a simple but ingenious modification of basic front projection.

For example, to photograph an actor walking behind a "wall," which exists only on the projected plate, a matte—corresponding exactly with the wall—would be painted on a large sheet of glass in front of the camera. When the actor walks into this matted area, he will, of course, disappear. A counter-matte is painted on another sheet of glass in front of the *second* screen, blocking out everything *except* for the wall. If the mattes are painted and positioned properly, the illusion is perfect: the big screen reflects the background plate into the camera lens; the small screen reflects in only the wall.

One of the system's more economical and amazing features is its ability to instantly show in the camera *exactly* what the composite image will look like on film. "With us, the set is already lit once the plate is made," explained Eppolito. "George Lucas wouldn't have had, for example, the troubles he did lighting the forest scenes for *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK*." Though Introvision would encounter its own unique problems in doing such a sequence, the time consuming lighting of a huge set would not have been one of them.

"You light and shoot our system essentially the same way you would a conventional set," said Mesa. "We're a director's medium because the director gets exactly what he sees through the lens *and* has his

300 pounds, and is attached to an existing camera. We've used Ultracam, which is Frank Leonetti's camera model, or Panavision, and we prefer them. But the system can adapt to any format. The actors had their props with platforms and stepladders to perform their moves on. Then, we had the "set" slides projected on the Scotchlite screen. Other than that, it's an empty stage, even though people appear and disappear from behind objects on the screen and move with total freedom in any direction."

Cameraman Bill Mesa elaborated, "We worked 315 feet away from the screen at one time, which is one *very* large throw. We're using a xenon light source and, though we had our slides lit up to ten hours at a time, we had no problems keeping our film plane cool, like you do with other systems. Although we use a screen of certain dimensions, in effect, we can make the screen any size the director requires for the particular scene or sequence."

Added Eppolito, "I know all this sounds like a terrible piece of double-talk, but with Introvision, you have the only system where you can

stand 30 feet *in front* of an object that you're 40 feet *behind* in the picture!"

Although the specifics of the Introvision system are complex, the basic technology is surprisingly simple, and is based on an annoying side effect of conventional front projection systems (see diagram, page 38). When using front projection, the camera and the projector have to be precisely aligned along the same axis. To do this, a "beam splitter" is used—a semi-transparent mirror positioned directly in front of the camera lens which reflects the projected plate onto the screen.

Normally, black velvet (or other light absorbing material) must be hung on the side of the camera opposite the projector to eliminate unwanted reflections. The Introvision system, however, uses a second front projection screen in place of the black velvet, allowing the camera to photograph *two* perfectly aligned images of a single plate at the same time. A series of carefully aligned mattes and counter-mattes is then used to drop a subject "inside" a projected image.

footage by the next day's rushes."

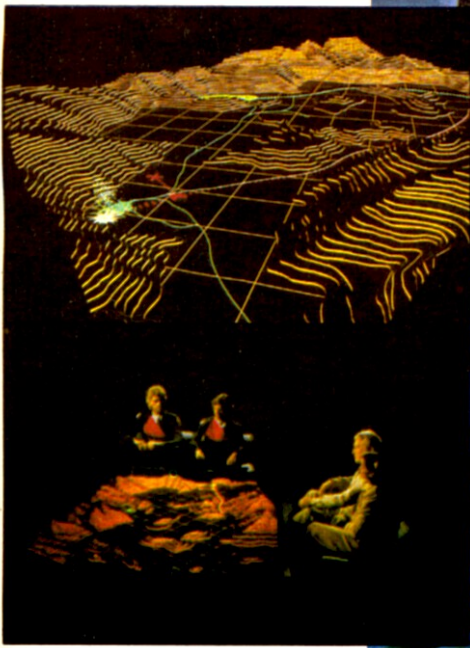
Before the official debut of the system in **OUTLAND**, the six person Introvision crew was asked by Universal to trouble-shoot a specific effects problem on **THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING WOMAN**. The footage generated for the final cut shows a minuscule Lilly Tomlin sitting atop an out-sized dining room table while Charles Grodin accidentally douses her with wine.

The quality of the work was not satisfying to the Introvision crew for a number of reasons. "We didn't shoot the plates," said Mesa. "And we didn't have any control on or off the stage." The film's soft-focus, pastel style of photography was at odds with Introvision's insistence on sharp focus. "In all honesty, we didn't really have then, the system we have now," said Eppolito. "THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING WOMAN used 35mm projection and now we use strictly VistaVision." Introvision effects were also used briefly in the giant vegetable scene in Warner Bros **FIRST FAMILY**.

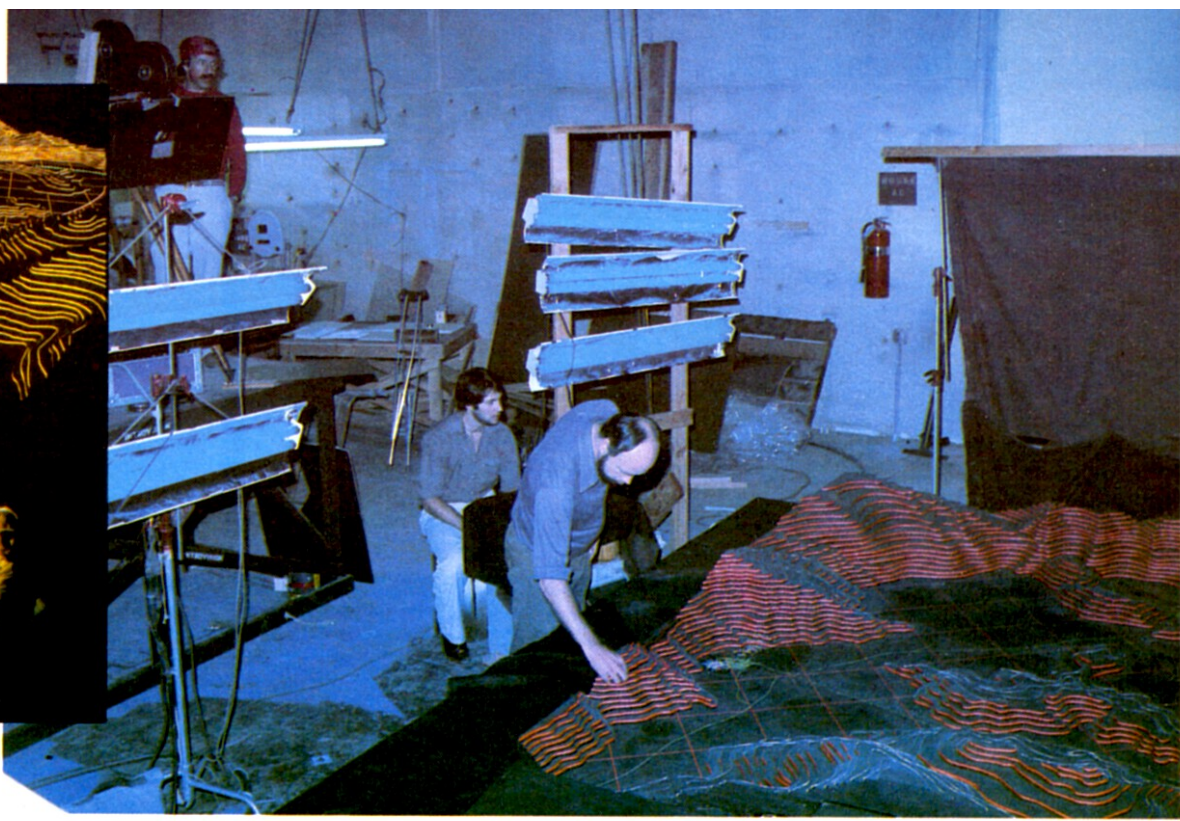
Introvision's **OUTLAND** experiences proved far more sanguine. Director Peter Hyams brought Introvision in during the early pre-production planning and storyboarding. "Hyams had the vision and daring to see that, though we do special effects, we're capable of doing more than that," said cameraman Bill Mesa. Pleased with the 50 shots provided by Introvision, Hyams added new camera set-ups while shooting in order to exploit the system's capabilities. Studio chief Alan Ladd Jr. admitted **OUTLAND** might have cost millions of dollars more had Introvision not been involved.

After **OUTLAND**, Introvision did a three minute tour-de-force Renault commercial for theatrical exhibition in France. Roman Polanski designed the spot which features the feisty little automobile zooming through postcard desert sands, African jungles, city tunnels—all to the tune of a jaunty Gallic jingle. Outstanding matte work by Introvision's Tim Donahue contributes to the wonderfully inventive and technically letter-perfect commercial.

Introvision became the focus of a rash of media attention and speculation after **OUTLAND**. However, despite all the brouhaha, a second feature film assignment came ambling in only after a full year of relative inactivity. Although none of the Introvision staff wanted to name drop, any number of the industry's creative big guns have tramped through the company's facilities with the prospect of present or future use of the system. Directors Hal Ashby, Peter Yates, Roman Polanski, and George Romero have reportedly considered Introvision as have the James Bond and Lucasfilm production staffs.



Bill Mesa (left), Lou Police and Tim Donahue (right) film the MEGAFORCE war map hologram (insets), constructed of fluorescent tape and shot with UV.



Of the constant parade of window shoppers, Introvision's promoter Tom Naud commented, "On every film, you've got to find the guys who are bolder, more knowledgeable. One guy's rumor in an insecure industry gets everyone in a conference room feeling nervous. This is a "me too" industry, an industry where mistakes are very costly and no one likes to take risks. We've gotten passed-over on feature work because someone rumored we break down a lot or that we don't work.

"Our biggest handicap has been that the projects with which we've been associated haven't really been ours. We are not George Lucas or

Doug Trumbull. We don't yet have a reputation which allows us to come on a picture and say "Tell us what you want, then get out of the way." We don't take the film away from a director, huddle over it in a back room and bring it back three months down the line.

"So, the directors, cameramen and lighting men with whom we've worked have been involved every step of the way," continued Naud. "Now that's a big plus for us as a sales point, but can be a negative factor in terms of results. The bottom line is that we're not getting from Introvision what we know we can and should be. Whenever we do it ourselves, the results

are smashing."

Naud's enthusiasm notwithstanding, Introvision faced a major hurdle in the summer of 1981: co-investor RKO Pictures, which owned 50% of Introvision, threatened to pull the plug on the whole enterprise. "They were going to shut us down and sell off the equipment," said Naud. "The only work we'd done while RKO was aboard was OUTLAND, so I knew they meant business. I mortgaged everything I could lay my hands on to raise the \$1.5 million to buy out their interest. Luckily, ten days later, business started coming in the door."

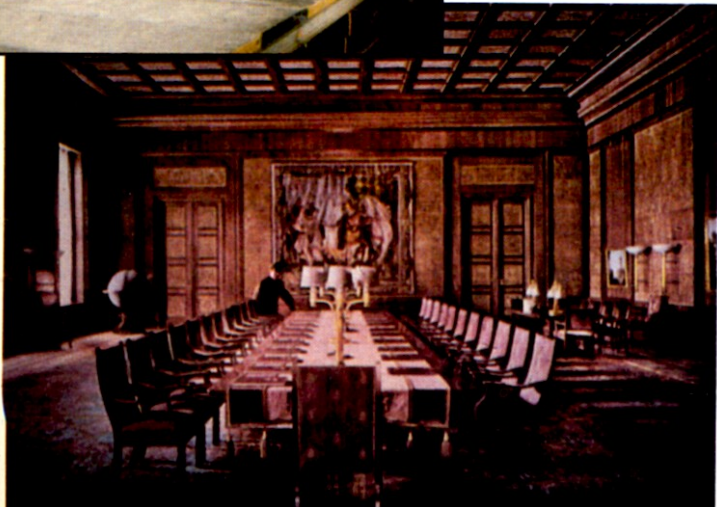
Two of those jobs-for-hire were

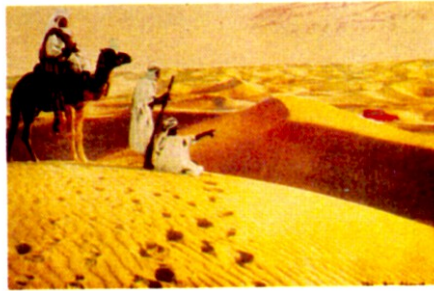
the 20th Century-Fox/Golden Harvest feature MEGAFORCE and ABC Circle Films' INSIDE THE THIRD REICH for television. The latter, a five hour epic broadcast over two consecutive nights in May, was directed by Marvin Chomsky. Chomsky had shared studio space with the Introvision company while directing EVITA. He and editor Jim Heckert had been impressed by the system and when the script of INSIDE THE THIRD REICH called for visualizing "impossible" scenes in the now-destroyed Reichstag, designed by Hitler's architect Albert Speer, they turned to Introvision.

"When Chomsky met with Speer



INSIDE THE THIRD REICH features Introvision's most amazing work, recently recognized with an Emmy nomination. Using photos supplied by architect Albert Speer, Introvision perfected front projection plates which put actors Derek Jacobi as Hitler and Rutger Hauer as Speer inside the Reichstag, a building destroyed in the second world war and beyond duplication as a set at any expense. Left: A classic Introvision shot as Jacobi walks "inside" one of the Reichstag's rooms. Inset: Blocking out the action on the stage, a horse stands-in for the room's desk. Right: Jacobi and Hauer walk down a Reichstag corridor. Inset: The stage set-up used to film the shot.





COMMERCIALS currently play a large role in meeting Introvision's overhead because feature filmmakers have failed to make full use of the system. The sequence shown here illustrates the company's first effort, a short for the Renault automobile, shown theatrically in Europe. The commercial was designed by Roman Polanski, and depicts the rugged little car speeding

and saw the only existing photographs of the building, he had us in mind," said Introvision's cameraman Bill Mesa. "Of course, the project posed limitations for us. Normally, when we photograph plates, we use certain angles and viewpoints because we know we're going to match those perspectives on the shooting stage. When Speer shot the photographs, he'd used an extremely wide lens. That forced perspective on us. Although the photographs we used for the conference room and hall scenes were in black and white, we located magazine shots that were in color. We spent a week matching and coloring the photos. The actual shooting took three days."

Introvision's work for **INSIDE THE THIRD REICH** proved a small, but highly impressive showcase, and has been nominated for an Emmy, somewhat confusingly in the "Best Animation" category. Actors playing Hitler and Speer (Derek Jacobi and Rutger Hauer) appear to travel deep inside a room and hallway that in reality were destroyed in 1945.

"Recreating those was a real task," said Mesa. "In order to create the illusion of the actors travelling deeply into the shot, we had to angle the floor at a certain elevation. We cheated the illusion. In the hall scene, we had to airbrush shadow reflections on the floors.

Introvision inventor John Eppolito with Judy Garland on the yellow brick road, the initial test shot which pointed the way to the development of the system.



Our artist Tim Donahue had his hands full on that one."

Introvision's work on **MEGAFORCE**, an \$18 million celluloid comic strip, was a mixed bag. While rumored to have pumped a cool million dollars into the company's coffers, the 15 week shooting schedule and budget-cutting maneuvers were, in Naud's words, "a nightmare."

Early in October 1981, director Hal Needham (**SMOKEY AND THE BANDIT**, **HOOPER**) looked into Introvision to solve some of **MEGAFORCE**'s problems economically. The film's script called for a convincing electrical generating station on a desert; a high-tech subterranean city crammed with military equipment befitting an international mercenary force; a simulated parachute drop; hologram effects; and a full-scale explosion in an ammo dump.

Needham brought original storyboards for the film to Introvision. **OUTLAND** director Peter Hyams was brought-in to look over Needham's boards and advise him on Introvision's capabilities. Needham had worked for Hyams as a stunt coordinator, and the two were good friends. "Peter Hyams was an ally, as always," said Bill Mesa. "He told them exactly what he thought we could handle. We signed the contract the following day."

Landing the **MEGAFORCE** project was a boon to the company's sagging financial picture, but the assignment was nerve-racking for Introvision's creative staff. "The problems that arose were largely the result of time pressures," said Mesa. "We got **MEGAFORCE** in the beginning of October. We had to come up with concepts, get them approved, make them physical and photograph them for plates by the end of November. We were shooting during the last weeks of November and the first two of December. That's very concentrated and intense."

One of Introvision's knottier tasks was to realize the "inner city" which forms a backdrop for considerable action in the film. "Hal Needham gave the art director, the production designer and myself an open directive as to what the city

should look like," said Introvision artist Tim Donahue, who was largely responsible for conceptualizing the final design.

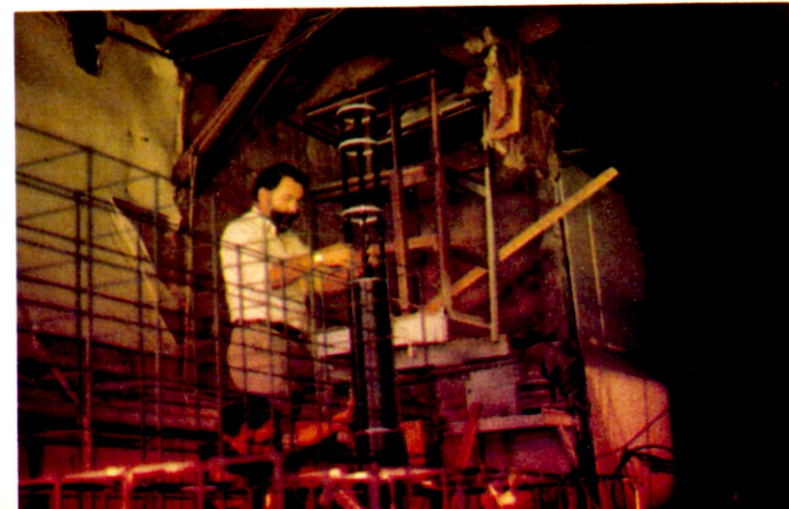
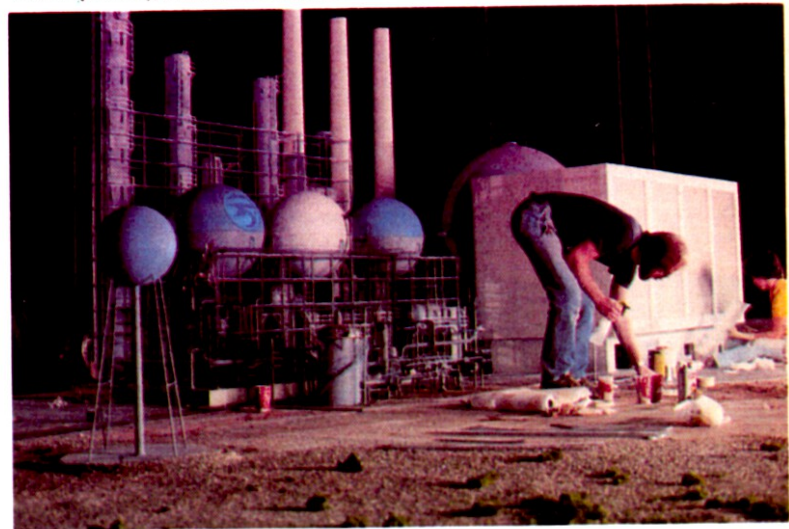
"Ideas ranged from a **STAR WARS** approach to a more realistic concept," continued Donahue. "Needham wanted a concrete and steel look, so we followed that line. We approached it two ways. First, we tried using a matte painting. After a while, it was decided we should build a model in order to answer some of the technical challenges we were bumping up against."

Once director Needham had approved Donahue's concept and the model had been built, the composite work began. "We compo-

sited onto the floor of the model actual footage of the grounds at Edwards Air Force base, with vehicles driving around," said Donahue. "Bill Mesa and I shot it from a catwalk to get the proper perspective. There were no aircraft in Edwards at the time because the space shuttle was to be parked there. So we had a model of a C-130 built to scale. Shadows of the plane had to be inserted so that when the vehicles run through, the shadow goes across them. That was done with a neutral density filter when we rear-projected it.

"We chose seven areas on the model where action would be occurring simultaneously," Donahue continued. "The shots were

John Stears' Introvision crew (below) rigs the oil refinery miniature for explosion. Stears (bottom), who worked with Introvision on **OUTLAND, during construction.**





around the globe amid various picture postcard scenes which appear to come to life. The short was directed by William Klein in Paris after Polanski was forced to bow-out of the project due to restrictions on his freedom of travel to the United States. Introvision art director Tim Donahue's letter perfect matte work greatly enhanced Polanski's wonderfully inventive scenario.

done using eight extras at Raleigh Studios filming against grey floor and walls."

Stop motion animator David Allen provided the stop motion projectors needed to insert the live action footage into the model. "It took Allen three days to round up the projectors," said Introvision artist Charles Chioda. "We both wondered whether anyone had ever done something like this in one building before. Those projectors were probably used in every animated feature in history."

The whole scene represented a definite change in *modus operandi* for the Introvision company. "Because of the time constraints, we decided to do the sequence as a

rear-projection composite shot rather than as an Introvision shot," said matte artist Tim Donahue. "It was a pretty complicated set-up. There was a large photo blow-up of the model with holes cut out where the live action was to appear. The projectors were set up all over the stage. Our original plan had been to put the principal actors into the scene by Introvision, but because we had half the amount of time usually allotted for effects work, we just pressed ahead."

Apparently less difficult for Introvision was a parachute drop sequence. Three sizes of model chutes as well as the transport vehicles they carried were designed by Steve Chioda. Lou Police painted a

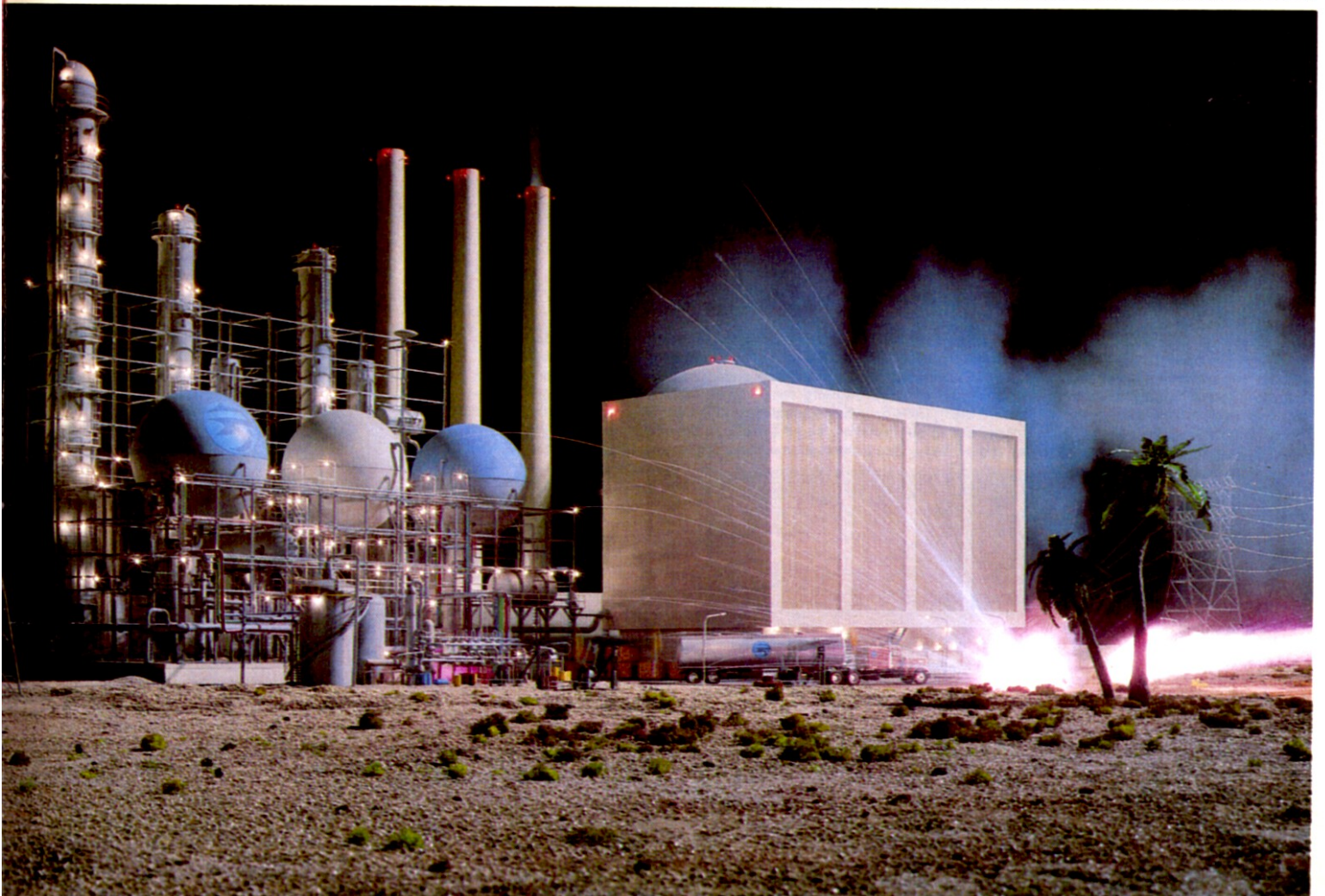
front projected matte painting of the night sky, as a backdrop for the scene.

"We decided to keep the chutes relatively still, not moving erratically," said Donahue. "We built a special front-projection rig to go on a dolly. It was rigged so that the camera as well as the front projection rig would move up, rather than the parachutes going down. The miniature airplane was rigged to match the same upward movement so it wouldn't appear to drop with the parachutes! Because the black vehicles being dropped against the dark night sky background caused us trouble, we painted them grey to get a better exposure."

While the Introvision crew seemed relatively satisfied with their contribution to the parachute scenes, several made it clear exactly where their work left off and other hands crept in. "There's a lot of controversy as to what we did and what Zoran Persic's Zoptic's system did in the parachute scene," said Mesa. "We dropped the parachutes, but the shot where you see Persis Khambatta and Barry Bostwick flying through the air and kissing is *not* ours but Zoran's. A later shot of Barry flying his motorcycle into the plane is also Zoran's. We didn't fly anybody in the film." Praise and blame should be meted out accordingly.

Designing and executing a war

In addition to their unique brand of front projection effects, with MEGAFORCE Introvision branched out into supplying other kinds of special effects, like the oil refinery complex below, which is destroyed at the beginning of the film. Introvision imported effects expert John Stears from England to supervise the construction and demolition.





Tim Donahue (left) rigs the parachute drop in MEGAFORCE for filming. The shot is shown (insets) with and without Introvision's front-projected artwork.



room for the film became the biggest headache for artist Tim Donahue. Hal Nedham wanted the room to be busy. A miniature set was built constructed of clear plexiglass with miniature flashing computer screens, lights and video displays. The Introvision company brought in Steve Barncart, a computer expert and Carol Adams, a slide projection expert, to coordinate images on eight screens, including Tel-Sat photos, radar, maps, and NASA space views of Earth.

Optical fibers filled-in the look of computer lights on the miniature. The continuous fibers were made to appear flashing in random patterns by means of a wheel with patterned holes, rotated in front of the slide projector lamp illuminating the fibers. Eight slide projec-

tors, choreographing the various visual displays, were sequenced by trial and error for the most pleasing results, then programmed for automatic computer playback during filming. To give the computer screen a more realistic, less shiny-plastic look, rear-projection material was applied onto the screen with the dull side facing the camera.

As a budget-cutting measure, scenes scheduled to use 18 and 20 extras were scaled down to four and six. "When we learned we weren't going to be given enough people to make the set look busy, we brought the scale of the war room down," said Donahue. MEGAFORCE audiences may notice a similarly under-populated look to a number of Introvision designed "sets."

One shot in MEGAFORCE cre-

ated the opportunity for Introvision to simulate a hologram. The scene shows a lighted board with small lights showing military strategies and attack maneuvers. Steve Barncart sequenced the graphic tactical display by computer using tiny quartz lights. The scene works quite well technically and is given a mighty assist from a hologram of Porky Pig which appears to dance over the table top with the actors watching and reacting.

Another hologram effect accomplished on stage was dropped from the finished film. In the scene three characters were to be introduced by walking out of large hologram rock. The effect resembled an optical dissolve, but was actually a very soft matte. The actors sort of 'bled' through the rock and then

came out in the open.

To accomplish scenes depicting an attack on an electrical plant complex and an ammunition dump, Introvision imported model-maker John Stears (OUTLAND) from England. Stears made miniatures of soft plaster to break apart in realistic large chunks for explosions. Since the plaster had to be fairly wet, considerable model assemblage took place right on stage. Pre-shooting tests of the explosion effects were made, and a week was spent lighting and shooting the final sequence.

Not always did the effects come together, or fly apart, as planned. In the attack on the electrical plant, a huge dome tears off in a fireball effect. Originally, Stears and his assistant prescored the five foot diameter dome to have it break up

INTROVISION'S DEMONSTRATION REEL includes this Grimm's Fairy Tale sequence filmed specially to show-off the system's capabilities. The final composite (left) and the same scene shown with the Introvision front projection screen turned-off (right), illustrate the extent of the front projected set. The projected background plate image is a conventional three foot high by five foot wide glass painting, rendered by Introvision artists Roger Lee and Tim Donahue. A fuller shot of the set (shown inset) includes an actress seated at the window of one of the painted buildings, an example of Introvision's capability to put performers and live action anywhere inside the projected plate. Feature filmmakers have yet to tap the system's vast potential. Imagine a live action LORD OF THE RINGS.



in the explosion. During the shooting, the dome blew off all in one piece. However, the necessity of an expensive re-take was avoided by a stroke of blind luck: the surrounding flames masked the goof sufficiently to make it look convincing on film.

For director Hal Needham, Introvision proved a boon in slicing MEGAFORCE production costs considerably. "We got scope and production values out of Introvision that would have cost us millions to duplicate or even *approach*," said Needham. "The stuff we did in the underground complex that has multiple tiers, the tunnels—all of that stuff—could never be built and still kept within a reasonable budget.

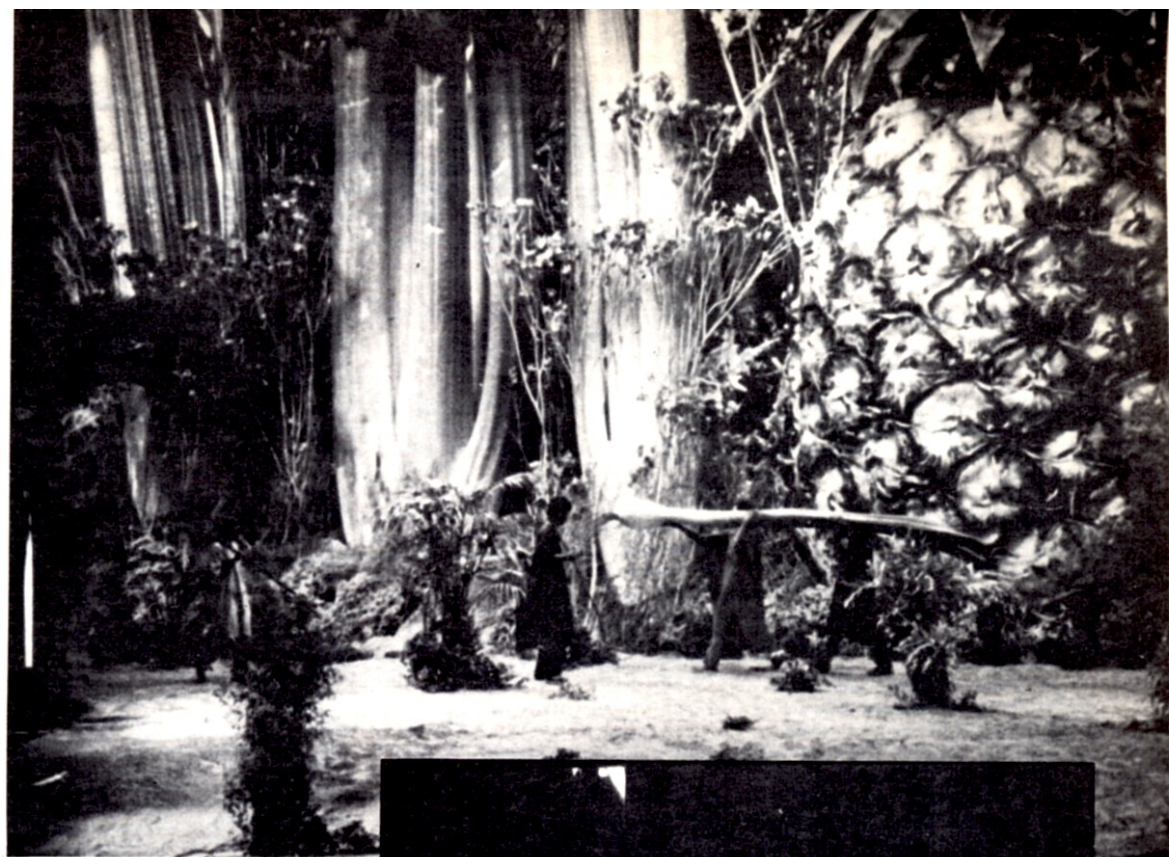
"Before production we went to Douglas Trumbull and Introvision," Needham continued. "Trumbull's work speaks for itself—the stuff is fantastic, but it also means that you get important elements taken out of your hands for maybe six months. You could get your effects work back and be dissatisfied with it, but there's no time to do anything else. With Introvision, we'd be looking at what we shot the next day, so if any changes needed to be made, all they'd have to do is re-shoot the plate or switch the lighting."

But for Needham, who likes to work very fast, Introvision also had its drawbacks. "Introvision is slow," he said. "If you want to change a set-up, you're talking about three to four hours of work. But I've got to tell you, those Introvision guys work their asses off to please you. I mean they're total perfectionists."

Another problem with the Introvision process is the interaction between the actors and the sets. "It's tough on the actors," Needham said. "I mean they are standing on parallels or sitting in these chairs with nothing else around them. What I did was let the actors look through the lens. That way, they could see exactly what the scene would look like. It worked."

In addition to doing work for features and commercials, Introvision has definite plans to produce their own features. Artists Roger Lee and Tim Donahue (whose miniature work was featured on ABC's INFINITE HORIZONS) have been quietly shooting miniatures for incorporation into the company's maiden voyage, a science fiction horror film. "Our first production is already on the boards," said Donahue. "It's like ALIEN, with the feeling of a relentless nightmare. The technical work has already started, but other projects keep coming up, so work is a little sporadic. When we complete our picture, we think it will be unlike anything audiences have been offered before. It will be very visual and a boon for Introvision."

As for the company's future proj-



FIRST FAMILY featured the early test work of Introvision in one sequence featuring giant fruits and vegetables (above). The oversized food for the set cost \$31.52 and was devoured by the crew when the shot was finished. The set-up for filming (inset) shows the spare set and large Scotchlite screen.



ects, several potentially interesting jobs are on the burners. Naud is particularly enthusiastic about an Introvision co-production deal which would give the company greater creative and conceptual input on a proposed fantasy film. At press time, another possibility was the next James Bond film, OCTOPUSSY. And contracts have already been signed for Introvision to work on EXTERMINATOR-II a sequel to the successful independent action film of 1980.

In the meantime, Introvision has been meeting overhead costs by muscling into television commercials. The company's maiden voyage for Renault led to several international prizes and a second commercial for the auto maker filmed in the U.S. in the spring of 1982. In April, Introvision also fabricated a fantasy landscape of ice cream trees, a sundae carousel, and rivers of soda pop for a Friendly Ice Cream commercial. During the same month, Introvision joined forces with Disney for an Animatronic display which will be shown first in Japan and later at Disney's Epcot Center in Florida.

Another commercial for Bendex Corporation was produced by Bob Abel's company who hired Introvision to realize a constantly-changing cosmic environment behind live actors such as Clint Eastwood and Cliff Robertson. "We are not a commercials company," said Tom

Naud, "but we're pushing that venue to cover the cost of overhead. I'm aware of how filmmakers look down on this kind of work, but we've found the work methods of commercial producers conducive to ours. They tend to be pretty meticulous. Every frame is life or death."

In May, Introvision moved to larger studio space with two soundstages, and facilities for screening, dubbing and editing. "In five years, we hope to be a worldwide entity," said Naud. "I hope to have five Introvision set-ups around the globe. At present, we have three people trained in operating the system. We have two-thirds of our second system already built and that will be put in place in England. We'd like to be making our own pictures *right now*, but you can't run a railroad on two rails. We're still in the exploratory stage, the credibility-establishing stage."

"We really want to give writers and directors the freedom to dream big, write anything they choose and make it possible within the scope of a realistic budget," inventor John Eppolito enthused. "Peo-

ple need heroes, stories bigger and better than life. That's what movies used to be able to do. We want to open those doors further than before."

If there is one disappointment in John Eppolito's zest for Introvision and its potential, it lies in his sadness that filmmaker innovators like Hitchcock, Griffith and close personal friend Busby Berkeley aren't around to reap the benefits of his brainchild.

"I'm going to show everything we have on film to Busby's widow," said Eppolito. "In a small way that will be a little like showing it to him. But can you *imagine* what he could have done with a medium like this?"

We can fantasize about endless rows of laser-toting Berkeley blondes time-stepping on Saturn's braided rings, but they'll remain just a pipedream. Still, should any number of Introvision's big-screen projects get the go-ahead, moviegoer's imaginations are due for some happy, innovative hours at the theater again. And, at least for the filmmakers, at very affordable prices. □

REVIEWS

Ridley Scott must learn that films can't live by design alone

BLADE RUNNER

A Warner Bros release, 6.82, 117 mins. In color, scope, 70mm and Dolby stereo. Directed by Ridley Scott. Screenplay by Hampton Fancher, David Peoples. Produced by Michael Deeley.

[For complete cast and credits see 125-126/24]

Deckard Harrison Ford
Batty Rutger Hauer
Rachael Sean Young

"There are certain moments in movies where the background can be as important as the actor," proclaims director Ridley Scott. "The design of a film is the script." Scott is a supreme visual stylist with a gift for design unequalled among contemporary directors, but he's wrong. Design is a vital element, especially if the audience is to accept anyone's physically imposing vision of the future, but staggering technical virtuosity—in and of itself—can never replace character and story values. And this realization points out Scott's fatal flaw.

BLADE RUNNER proffers a thousand course feast for the eyes, but only bread and water for the mind and spirit. Never before has the future looked like this: amazingly detailed; persuasively real (most of the time), in an everyday, lived-in way; drenched with rich, contributive atmospherics; tinged with vivid and nightmarish, yet oddly compelling, shadings.

Had Scott cared to extend this lavish attention beyond the film's settings, we might now be contemplating a fully-realized masterpiece. By falling well short of classic status, given the great potential implicit in the material and the film's undeniable achievements, taps a keener disappointment than would be felt in the presence of lesser ambition and lesser results.

The opening sequence ranks with the most astounding introductions to a film ever seen. Our grand approach through the Hades landscape is reflected in the iris of a single observer. Unless this constitutes a flash-forward, the observer inside the airborne spinner car, as it glides down towards the Tyrell Pyramid, cannot be ex-blade runner Deckard, whom we don't meet until the noodle-bar scene. But metaphorically, it is Deckard—with his point-of-view standing in for our own. It is also the film's last direct, personal link between the protagonist and his milieu.

But soon we are into Deckard's lackluster, redundant narrative (with one or two revealing exceptions: "Sushi," says Deckard. "That's what my ex-wife used to call me: cold fish."), and the dynamics of a simplistic android hunt. The weak, thin

script Scott filmed seems closer to the earlier Hampton Fancher's drafts than the David Peoples rewrite which source novel author Philip K. Dick said had saved the script. Very little of the dimension and thematic subtext screenwriter David Peoples supposedly put back in the story seems in evidence.

While the source novel (*Do Android's Dream Of Electric Sheep*) is ultimately unsatisfying, Dick's stimulating moral philosophical concerns, flawed—yet sympathetic—human characters, and his unique approach were sustaining by themselves. Ridley Scott is certainly under no obligation to film the book, but he can't blithely jettison the book's thematic core without replacing it.

In the future depicted in the novel, depopulation is the result of limited nuclear war, radical climate change and heavy off-world migration. Most animals are extinct, those that remain are considered almost sacred, and ownership of animoid simulacra is common. Yet "human" android life holds no value at all. Those who hunt down androids illegally on Earth dare not feel sorry (develop empathy) for them. In order to survive, methods employed by hunter and hunted further blur the distinction between them. Certainly, Dick's novel suggested much that could have enriched Scott's regulation chase structure without weighing it down: the room is there in the film's pacing, which is too measured and deliberate for an action piece.

BLADE RUNNER nods in the direction of this missing emotional center through the somewhat more nuanced characters of Pris and J. F. Sebastian, and the plight of the android Rachael, a virtual human being with fictitious memories, but not autonomous identity. The muted romance between Deckard and Rachael also remains undeveloped. It falls to Harrison Ford and the affecting Sean Young to try to fill the void—an extreme request to make of them. It's to their credit that what little empathy the film engenders doesn't all go to the hunted replicants.

In terms of *film noir*, BLADE RUNNER is more than a *hommage*, but less than the genuine article. Deckard can't be a true noir hero. He's not in the grip of alienation or obsession—his world is second-nature to him; his attitude towards it remains unexpressed in any meaningful way—nor is he governed by a truly fatalistic outlook. Being weary and battered aren't adequate noir credentials. In the end, Deckard con-



Harrison Ford as Deckard, weary and battered, but not a true film noir hero.

fronts little besides physical danger.

Rather, it's the style, the flavor, the look and feel of *film noir* that is BLADE RUNNER's triumph. Jordan Cronenweth's captivating photography relies on the diffusive properties of steam and smoke, as much as on the familiar noir chiaroscuro. Rachael, beautifully lit and shot through the curling cigarette smoke, is at once real and ethereal, mysteriously alluring and sublimely romantic. The film's abundance of striking images should give Cronenweth an early lead on the next cinematography Oscar.

Too much praise cannot be heaped on Lawrence Paull's production design. From the choked and threatening streets of 2019 Los Angeles, to the classically clean lines of Tyrell's deco-Egyptian office, we are arrestingly transported to the unique vision of BLADE RUNNER's world. Syd Mead's vehicles, accessories (the Voight-Kampff and Esper machines are terrific entries in the annals of detection) and basic design philosophy lend to the overall aura of functionality. While Scott's insistence on "layering" builds a powerful verisimilitude, even as the accretive detail comes to exceed what can be absorbed in one or even two viewings.

Accomplishments in most other technical areas reach similar heights. The BLADE RUNNER miniature crew's contribution approaches the nonpareil standard set by Greg Jein in Spielberg's 1941, with only the roof and spires of the Tyrell Pyramid betraying a trace of model-kit origin. The aerial tours of "Ridleyville" by spinner car, courtesy of the motion-control magic of Doug Trumbull's Effects Engineering Group, is fully convincing and never less than breathtaking; their optical work breaks new ground in sophistication

and complexity.

A fitting counterpart to these awesome sights is Vangelis' soulful score, accented by coolly weaving sax lines, snatches of mournful geisha ballad, and assorted wails. Soaring and eloquent, it is grandeur without pomposity, supplying much of the feeling the script and Scott refuse to provide.

As a director, Scott is really in his element with stylish, bravura action scenes—all the while retaining firm command over the total visual environment. The pursuit and "retirement" of Zhora (a bit overdone, in a perfectionist, TV-commercial way); Batty's murder of his maker, with its overtones of Greek tragedy and the Frankenstein legend; Deckard's deadly gymnastic interlude with Pris; and the cleverly staged final chase through, up and over the Bradbury building; all are set-pieces put over forcefully and with impressive flair. Furthermore, he is nearly as adept in the execution of quieter dramatic and romantic scenes.

But, ultimately, it is Scott's indifference to real story substance, backed up by *some* human connection, that does him in. Even in a taut, spare, strictly action-orientated film like BULLITT, director Peter Yates still managed to include a final shot of Steve McQueen glancing into a mirror, his reflection questioning the true cost of his profession. Not so profound, this mere ounce of insight, but more than Scott gives us here.

What we are left with is a storehouse of tantalizing unanswered questions and unexplored possibilities. In BLADE RUNNER, Ridley Scott wanted to avoid making an "esoteric" film. But with this fascinating, maddening, unique science fiction film, he has leaned much too far in the opposite direction.

Jordan R. Fox

Dirty Harry gets his wings

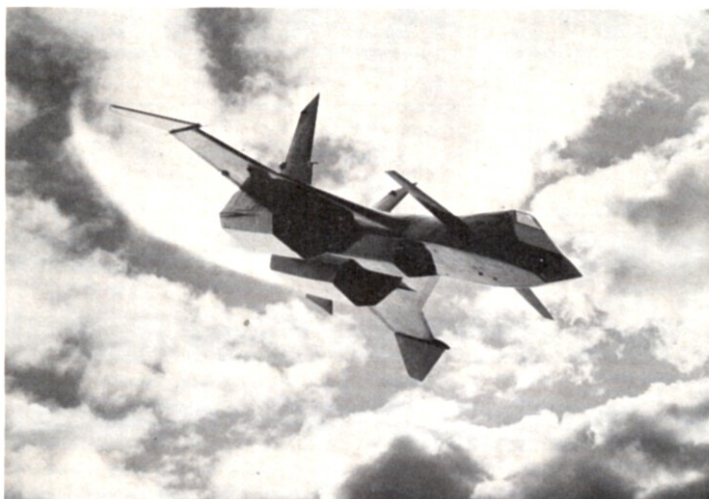
FIREFOX

A Warner Bros release, 6 82, 137 mins. In color. Produced and directed by Clint Eastwood. Executive producer, Fritz Manes. Screenplay, Alex Lasker, Wendell Wellman, based on the novel by Craig Thomas. Cinematographer, Bruce Surtees. Editors, Ferris Webster, Ron Spang. Music by Maurice Jarre. Art directors, John Graysmark, Elayne Ceder. Set decoration by Ernie Bishop. Producer of special effects, John Dykstra. Sound by Bruce Logan. Associate producer, Paul Hitchcock.

Mitchell Gant	Clint Eastwood
Kenneth Aubrey	Freddie Jones
Buckholz	David Huffman
Pavel Ujenskov	Warren Clarke
Semelovsky	Ronald Lacey
Colonel Kontarsky	Kenneth Colley
General Vladimirov	Klaus Lowitsch
Pytro Baranovich	Nigel Hawthorne
First Secretary	Stefan Schnabel
General Brown	Thomas Hill
Major Lansve	Clive Merrison

No major contemporary star has generated as much controversy as Clint Eastwood. Despite an astounding success during Eastwood's spaghetti western days, the critical community treated him with amused condescension. Until DIRTY HARRY. Whereupon they attacked him with howls of moral outrage. Since then, if one is to believe the vocal majority, Eastwood has made nothing but violent, fast-moving trash, pandering to the popular audience's fascist and reactionary impulses.

So what's amusing about FIREFOX, Eastwood's latest actioner, isn't that the film is a taut, unusual amalgam of effects and espionage, but that the selfsame critics who have attacked the low-brow elements in Eastwood's films for over a decade, are now grouching because they feel cheated. They complain that FIREFOX is all talk and no forward



The Russian MIG-31, code named "Firefox," stolen by pilot Clint Eastwood.

motion. The film is, in a word, dull.

It isn't. FIREFOX is simply one of Eastwood's best packages as an actor/producer/director. Tense, strange, invigorating, FIREFOX is a very particular tribute to the solidity and craftsmanship of Eastwood's maturing directorial talents.

Firefox, the bestseller by Craig Thomas, mixed equal amounts of a standard spy plot with an obviously well-researched aeronautical patina before salting in one of the most inept protagonists ever to grace a supermarket check-out rack. FIREFOX, the film, retains all these elements; in fact, it's a remarkably faithful adaptation of the novel. In preserving Thomas' concept of a crack pilot who is totally useless on the ground, Eastwood shows an increasing willingness to gamble against his supra-cool and competent image. Eastwood gives a sweaty, skittish performance

as the psychologically damaged Mitchell Gant.

Eastwood may be given a convenient plot device and rationale for his clumsiness (a catastrophic Vietnam war experience that resurfaces under stress causing paralyzing breakdowns), but this flaw is the farthest Eastwood has gone in playing against his popular grain.

The plot plays like a comic book, but a *good* comic book. Gant is smuggled into Russia by the CIA to ultimately steal the Russian's top of the line fighter plane, the MIG 31. The first two-thirds of FIREFOX seem to be set against a deepening, ever more threatening night. FIREFOX's Russia is a paranoid dreamscape, swarming with suspicious police and omnipresent KGB agents. A country where an inquisition can start at an airport Customs desk and explode into violence in a subway

men's room.

It's a jingoistic view of the Red Bear, of course, a relic from the cold war. But the recent reverberations of Poland and Afghanistan and the ongoing mistreatment of Russian Jews go a long way towards strengthening the xenophobia of the film. (The film's subplot about Soviet Jewry might just hand Eastwood a demographic element he hasn't had lately: a liberal audience).

Throughout the first two-thirds of FIREFOX, Eastwood's sure hand generates some genuine suspense, and the streamlined, rapidly unfolding storyline is a happy substitute for the gratuitous shoot-em-up format that's become *de rigueur* for many Eastwood products. FIREFOX's violence, when it comes, is well-staged, fast, felt, and messy.

Eastwood and cinematographer Bruce Surtees have also given the film a truly marvelous look, sort of a cross between the looming foreground studies of Sergio Leone and the hallucinatory interplay of lurid color and shadow that was the trademark of Mario Bava. This stylization reaches its summit as Eastwood crouches in a bizarrely constructed, surreally tiled shower room, a weirdly crimson ceramic womb seemingly designed without right angles.

Utilizing every inch of the wide, wide screen, an impressive downward pan eventually introduces the futuristic plane gleaming in its hanger under a bank of Felliniesque floodlights, signaling Eastwood's final penetration of the secret FIREFOX base. A bit later, his identity concealed by a weirdly alien flight-suit, Eastwood takes a comically laconic walk across the hanger floor, a satirical spin-off of his lanky, trademark western gait. Finally—and sig-

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A coldy calculated attempt to tap the massive moron market

MEGAFORCE

A 20th Century-Fox release, 6 82, 99 mins. In color. Directed by Hal Needham. Produced by Albert S. Ruddy. Executive producer, Raymond Chow. Written by James Whittaker, Albert S. Ruddy, Hal Needham, Andre Morgan. Cinematographer, Michael Butnik. Editors, Patrick Roark, S. Skip Schoolnik. Sound by Jack Solomon. Production designer, Joel Schiller. Special optical effects by Introvision.

Ace Hunter	Barry Bostwick
Zara	Persis Khambatta
Dallas	Michael Beck
Byrne-White	Edward Mulhare

While the greed and cynicism of many in the film industry has produced some bizarre films with an odd charm and innocent appeal, there is nothing unconscious or innocent about MEGAFORCE or its director/co-writer Hal Needham. By his own admission (He once said, "If someone handed me FIDDLER ON THE ROOF, I wouldn't know what the fuck to do with it."), the former stuntman quickly turned out a number of exploitation films to cash in on the moron market.

He hit this vast market squarely with SMOKEY AND THE BANDIT and three more films with Burt Reynolds, SMOKEY AND THE BANDIT PART II (which Jeff MacNelly of "Shoe" cartooning fame marvelously called "A movie for entry-level humans"), HOOPER, and THE CANNONBALL RUN. These films grossed astonishingly well at the box-office and insured it was only a matter of time before he attempted to break into the science fiction market.

With that attempt, MEGAFORCE, Needham shows even more contempt for his audience than his last four films. The plot, if it can be called that, is little more than an excuse to get all the megahardware into action. Henry Silva, as a cigar-chomping Latino named Guerera (clever naming, what?) is disrupting the democratic calm of neighboring Sardou by rolling in with his tanks and blowing up Sardou's industries like a Cuban Hell's Angel.

The Sardouians, being wimpy

knee-jerk liberals (and living in a country that seems to consist completely of Nevada desert), come running to the Megaforce, a secret multinational army led by bright-of-teeth, but empty-of-mind, Barry Bostwick and his equally dumb sidekick, Michael Beck. Bostwick and Beck have a great time running around their desert headquarters in tight, quasi-homosexual pastel spandex outfits that were, according to Bostwick, co-designed by Mattel.

Needham makes no bones that his main interest is in his expensive collection of modified dirt bikes and scratch-built dune buggies which spend most of the film zipping around and showing the stuntpeople's abilities to pop wheelies and fire machine guns at the same time. In a way, the film has a uniquely Southern Californian flavor, a Rapid Deployment Force as envisioned by "Funny Car" makers George "Batmobile" Barris and Ed "Big Daddy" Roth.

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Barry Bostwick and Persis Khambatta.

FILM RATINGS

ALIEN CONTAMINATION

Directed by Lewis Coates (a.k.a. Luigi Cozzi). Cannon Group, 7/82, 84 mins. With: Ian McCulloch, Louise Monroe, Martin Mose.

An astronaut is taken over by a monster on Mars and smuggles back some deadly eggs, which spew fluid when exposed to heat, causing the internal organs of the people they splatter to explode. It's just a spaghetti version of ALIEN on Earth—a dubbed hodgepodge from that inventive guy who brought us STAR CRASH. There's quite a bit of blood, but the chest-bursting scenes are (fortunately) not too realistic. ● **Judith P. Harris**

COMPUTERCIDE

Directed by Robert Michael Lewis. NBC-TV, 8/82 (© 1977), 110 mins. With: Joseph Cortese, Susan George, Donald Pleasance.

"Maybe the future doesn't work after all," says the world's last private eye at one point in this busted pilot from 1977, taken off the shelf for summer cannon fodder. Well, he got that part right. Straining for the light touch, telefilm has Cortese—a cut-rate Rockford type, circa 1996—on the trail of a cloning conspiracy. Bargain-budget production values don't do as much damage as the dull and obvious script, or Susan George, who's terrible, as usual. ○ **JRF**

CREEPSHOW

Directed by George Romero. Warner Bros, 10/82, 129 mins. With: Adrienne Barbeau, Hal Holbrook, Leslie Nielsen.

Fans of E.C. Comics will love this film, but it's unclear whether it will find favor with general audiences. By being entirely faithful to the spirit of the comics, screenwriter Steven King only turns in cardboard characters, which prevents the film from being the "very scary" movie he announces. Some subtler irony, rather than the macabre humor of the comics, was needed for such a big budget production. Technical credits are good—too good for what they purvey. ●● **Frederic Albert Levy**

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

Directed by James L. Conway. NBC-TV, 7/82 (© 1979), 110 mins. With: Martin Landau, Robert Hays, Charlene Tilton, Ray Walston.

In cleaning out the NBC archives, Grant Tinker has unearthed this plodding, bloated zombie-ized adaptation of the famous Poe tale. Eschewing either mood or subtlety for heavy-handed foreshadowing, director James Conway and scriptwriter Stephen Lord have resurrected every possible horror cliché. In the mouths of howlingly-miscast actors, the repetitious dialogue isn't even good enough to be considered camp. Stick with Roger Corman's 1969 classic. ○ **Steven Dimeo**

With only a little bit of talent in the writing and direction, this could have been a very funny film. As it is, the major howler is that you're asked to believe Robert

FILM TITLE	●●●●		●●●		●●		●		○			
	MUST SEE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	MEDIOCRE	WORTHLESS	DB	FSC	JRF	DJH	MJK	MM	DRS
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S SEX COMEDY / Woody Allen, Warner Bros, 7/82, 88 mins.			●●●●			●	●●●●			●●	●	
ANNIE / John Huston, Columbia, 5/82, 126 mins.			●			●				●●	○	
THE BEAST WITHIN / Philippe Mora, United Artists, 2/82, 92 mins.			●	○				○	●●			●●
BLADE RUNNER / Ridley Scott, Warner Bros, 5/82, 118 mins.		●●●●	●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●
CAT PEOPLE / Paul Schrader, Universal, 4/82, 119 mins.		●●●	●●	●●●		●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●
CONAN THE BARBARIAN / John Milius, Universal, 5/82, 129 mins.		●	●●●●	●●	●●●	●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●
DEAD MEN DON'T WEAR PLAID / Carl Reiner, Universal, B&W, 5/82, 89 mins.		●	●●	●	●●●			○	●			
DEATHTRAP / Sidney Lumet, Warner Bros, 3/82, 115 mins.		●	●●●	●●	●●●●							
E.T.—THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL / Steven Spielberg, Universal, 6/82, 118 mins.	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●
EVIL UNDER THE SUN / Guy Hamilton, Universal, 3/82, 117 mins.		●●	●●		●●●							●●
FIREFOX / Clint Eastwood, Warner Bros, 6/82, 130 mins.		●	●●●●	●●	●					●	●	●
THE HOUSE WHERE EVIL DWELLS / Kevin Conner, United Artists, 5/82, 88 mins.		●									●	
MEGAFORCE / Hal Needham, 20th Century-Fox, 6/82, 99 mins.		○	●●●●	○				○	○	○	○	●
PARASITE / Charles Band, Embassy, 3/82, 85 mins, 3-D		●	●							●	○	
POLTERGEIST / Tobe Hooper, MGM/UA, 6/82, 114 mins.		●●●	●●●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●●
QUEST FOR FIRE / Jean-Jacques Annaud, 20th Century-Fox, 2/82, 97 mins.	●●●	●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●	●●	●	●●	●	●●	●●
ROAD WARRIOR / George Miller, Warner Bros, 6/82, 95 mins.	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●
THE SECRET OF NIMH / Don Bluth, MGM-UA, 6/82, 82 mins.		●●	●●●●	●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●	●●	●●	●●●
SILENT RAGE / Michael Miller, Columbia, 4/82, 100 mins.		○	●●	●●		●	●●					●
STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN / Nicholas Meyer, Paramount, 6/82, 113 mins.		●●	●●●●	●●●	●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●	●●	●●	●●●
SWAMP THING / Wes Craven, Embassy, 2/81, 92 mins.			●●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●●
THE SWORD AND THE SORCERER / Albert Pyun, Group One Films, 3/82, 100 mins.			●●	●●						●	●●	
THE THING / John Carpenter, Universal, 6/82, 106 mins.	●●●	●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●
TRON / Steven Lisberger, Buena Vista, 7/82, 96 mins.		●●	●●	●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●
VISITING HOURS / Jean-Claude Lord, 20th-Century Fox, 4/82, 104 mins.		○	●●	○				●				
WRONG IS RIGHT / Richard Brooks, Columbia, 5/82, 119 mins.		●	●	●						●●		●●●

DB—David Bartholomew FSC—Frederic S. Clarke JRF—Jordan R. Fox DJH—David J. Hogan MJK—Michael J. Kaplan MM—Mike Mayo DS—Dan Scapperotti

Hays and Martin Landau are 36-year-old contemporaries. If you missed Landau's scenery chewing in WITHOUT WARNING, then here he is again, folks, in all his eye-rolling glory. ○ **Judith P. Harris**

FRIDAY THE 13TH—III

Directed by Steve Miner. Paramount Pictures, 8/82, 95 mins, in 3-D. With: Dana Kimmell, Richard Brooker, Catherine Parks, Paul Kratka.

The further adventures of Mrs. Voorhees' little boy offers more of the same, in what can easily be considered a remake of parts one and two. The addition of 3-D is a big plus for the film, although

nothing in the picture surpasses the 3-D effects in the title sequence, which includes one especially eye-popping shot. ● **DRS**

THE HITCH-HIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

Directed by Douglas Adams. Lionheart Television International, 7/82 (B.B.C., 1981). Six 30-minute episodes. With: Simon Jones, David Dixon.

Asinine comic space opera, based on a hit book and a B.B.C. radio series, but more like a poor man's Kurt Vonnegut. Two Britons shuttle through space and time, buffeted by video effects that are colorful, but none too convincing. ● **Bill Kelley**

MEGAFORCE

With: Barry Bostwick, Michael Beck, Persis Khambatta, Edward Mulhare.

War is hell, so I suppose that Hal Needham's attempt to indoctrinate the nation's youth with the idea that "a good time can be had by all" is morally reprehensible. On the other hand, this wonderfully benign, sugar-coated view of armed combat is archly entertaining: the characters and their mock-heroic repartee are endearing, especially larger-than-life villain Henry Silva, and Needham supplies stunts and action that amazes, if only for the sheer logistics involved. ●●●● **FSC**

SATAN'S MISTRESS

Directed by James Polakof. B.J. Creators, Inc. 6/82, 90 mins. With: Britt Ekland, Lana Wood, Tom Hallick, John Carradine.

Lana Wood, as a horny Malibu house-wife neglected by a workaholic hubby, begins to receive carnal visits from a gust of purple ectoplasm, which quickly assumes the form of hack actor Kabir Bedi. Ekland plays the convenient next-door best-friend psychic. Resolves incomprehensibly; best to exit after Carradine's fun cameo. Originally titled INCUBUS, changed to avoid confusion with SUCCUBUS. ○ **Tim Lucas**

THE SECRET OF NIMH

With the voices of: Elizabeth Hartman, Dom DeLuise, Peter Strauss, Hermione Baddeley, John Carradine.

A stunning first feature by ex-Disney employees that puts Disney's THE FOX AND THE HOUND to shame. It's too bad the story—two stories, really, not very well integrated—isn't up to the level of the artwork. The film has a schizophrenic tone in its attempt to be both dark and adult, and cutesy and family-orientated. ●●● **Kyle Courts**

The latest in this year's crop of films Disney probably wishes it made. The animation is nice and, if the backgrounds seem a bit static, at least they're detailed and charmingly colored. But the bottom line is: can today's urban audiences identify with rats as heroes? ●● **Judith P. Harris**

STORY OF A LOVE STORY

Directed by John Frankenheimer. ABC-TV, 6/82 (© 1977, a.k.a. IMPOSSIBLE OBJECT), 112 mins. With: Alan Bates, Dominique Sanda, Sean Bury.

Imagined butcherknifings, skeletons attending garden parties and other fantasy trappings adorn story of novelist Bates' extramarital romance. As the title portends, the film is a hall of mirrors, and the reflection sought is the resemblance of the Creator in the Created: Bates rails against and identifies with God throughout, an ambivalence echoed in his tense relationship with his son. Alternately elegiac and comic, it's loaded with French sequences ABC didn't bother to subtitle. How sad that this doesn't exist in the USA in complete form. ●●● **Tim Lucas**

VAMPIRE PLAYGIRLS

Directed by Jean Brismée. Hemisphere releasing, 6/82 (© 1974), 87 mins. With: Erika Blanc, Jean Servais, Daniel Emilfork.

Consumer alert: This is Brismée's THE DEVIL'S NIGHTMARE [also reviewed 5:1:30], a 1974 Belgian Italian-imported succubus tale, enjoyable in its off-balanced conglomeration of haunted-castle clichés and inspired theological symbolism, which make it advised viewing for students (as opposed to fans) of the genre. When observing my rating, bear in mind that I'm a sucker for horror erotica, European scenery and bargain-basement inventiveness. ●● **Tim Lucas**

MEGAFORCE

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These Kustom Kar Kommandoes barrel into Silva's home country and take on Silva in an endless showdown with scads of slow-motion shots of cycles jumping over a large chunk of the Nevada National Guard. The Megaforce soundly whumps Henry, and Smilin' Barry bids him a fond farewell by reminding him that, "The Good Guys always win... even in the '80s."

Bad material seems to bring out a variety of responses in actors and MEGAFORCE proudly continues the tradition of giving good actors lead-lined material. Edward Mulhare looks embarrassed for most of his part, wandering though his lines like he still wishes he was Mrs. Muir's ghost. Persis Khambatta is dreadful

in a sop-feminist role as an unbelievable woman general who pouts when Barry-poo won't take her along on the mission. He'd like to, you understand, but the boys wouldn't approve.

Only Barry Bostwick as "Ace Hunter" and Henry Silva seem to be able to inject any modicum of life and intelligence into roles so wooden they'd sprout roots if they stood still. Silva, an actor of considerable intelligence and talent who is inevitably typecast as a villain, lends a great deal of panache to his role and steals most of the scenes he's in. He chirps his lines with the aplomb of professional who knows it's all shit anyway.

As Silva's counterpart, Barry Bostwick's preppie-like charm does much to make the movie tolerable. There isn't a shred of believability to his character, but Bostwick displays

enough dash and warmth that it's a shame his talent is flattened by the godawful writing and direction.

With MEGAFORCE, Hal Needham has crossed the line from just being stupid to grotesque. The film is all toy action, with no blood, no death, and not surprisingly, no excitement. Needham is so determined to hype the upcoming line of Megaforce toys that there's absolutely no interest in any of the characters.

Hiding behind the bland, inhuman violence (and PG rating), MEGAFORCE is an obscene attempt to cash in on the movie merchandising market by inculcating children with the idea that multinational warfare ain't nothing more than a fun scuffle on the weekend with motorbikes. California Facism has finally made it to the screen. *Mike Mayo*



Hal Needham, a director whose films have been described as "being made for entry level human beings."

Hooper's vision & Spielberg's charm create a great ghost story

POLTERGEIST

A MGM/United Artists release, 5/82, 114 mins. In color. Produced by Steven Spielberg and Frank Marshall. Directed by Tobe Hooper. Written by Steven Spielberg, Michael Grais, Mark Victor. Cinematographer, Matthew F. Leonetti. Edited by Michael Kahn. Sound by Art Rochester. Production designer, James H. Spencer. Associate producer, Kathleen Kennedy. Music by Jerry Goldsmith. Special visual effects by Industrial Light & Magic. ILM supervisor, Richard Edlund. Special makeup effects by Craig Reardon.

Steve Craig T. Nelson
Diane JoBeth Williams
Dr. Lesh Beatrice Straight
Dana Dominique Dunne
Robbie Oliver Robins
Carol Anne Heather O'Rourke
Tangina Zeldia Rubinstein

Unlikely though the pairing of Steven Spielberg and (officially credited) director Tobe Hooper may seem on POLTERGEIST, it is actually a marriage made in Hollywood. Spielberg, as co-author/producer (and some say director), has tempered Hooper's harsh, visceral style with folksy humor and near-bloodless titillation, while Hooper has underscored Spielberg's conservative, child-at-play consciousness with dark touches of Grand Guignol.

The result is a rousing ghost story in the other-worldly tradition of THE TWILIGHT ZONE (see sidebar). It is astonishing, a tad chilling, and brimming with pyrotechnical thrills. Spielberg harbors none of the cynicism that made Hooper's TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE and FUNHOUSE such brutal experiences; he respects his audience and rewards rather than punishes them for submitting to his tried and true brand of harmless manipulation.

Home invasion, a favorite theme of Spielberg's, is the basis of his storyline for POLTERGEIST: a sudden upsetting of the middle-class apple cart in a "normal" suburb where the homes look identical and each family has 2.3 children as components of their American dream. Spielberg hardly denounces these values, but he does make us aware that, as picture-perfect as such an existence may seem, it does not guarantee immunity

from dangerous external forces—represented by sinister phantom forces—which do a hell of a lot more than go bump in the night.

POLTERGEIST is particularly effective in low-key moments, which function as a warm-up for the more spectacular goings-on in the second half of the film. Audiences giggle with nervous anticipation over the poltergeist's pyramid stacking of the kitchen chairs and Craig Reardon's ingenious "crawling steak" because they are earthbound phenomena closer to their own realm of experience. Much of the suspense, however, dissipates once the disturbances become full-blown, but ILM's first-rate technical effects are more than sufficient to carry the picture to its gangbuster conclusion.

Admittedly, there isn't much more to POLTERGEIST than cinematic sleight-of-hand, a craftsmanlike stringing together of a series of effects sequences designed to yield substantial payoffs for the captive audience. Spielberg's final script is skimpy on idea development—he drops the intriguing premise of the ghosts' use of that most devilish tool of modern technology—television—to strike

out at its intended victims, and rather dopey in its reverential treatment of the dead and other-dimension spirits.

He doesn't even bother to establish connections between seemingly unrelated poltergeist manifestations. What, for instance, does an illuminated procession of ectoplasmic figures marching down the living room staircase have to do with decade-old watches and jewelry falling out of the ceiling? When Spielberg does attempt to get a bit intellectual, the dialogue defeats the sincerity of the performers and slows the movie to a crawl.

The audience screams your hear during POLTERGEIST are much like the overeager, cathartic kind of outburst let loose by people on amusement park rides—a reassuring laugh and sigh of relief aren't far behind. Even if POLTERGEIST dazzles rather than truly scares the be-jeezus out of us, it does deliver the high emotional pitch of a ride on a roller coaster. The parallel couldn't be more apropos considering who the director of the film is, regardless of how much the film genuinely reflects the work of Tobe Hooper. POLTERGEIST is his *real* FUNHOUSE.

Kyle Counts

Oliver Robbins and JoBeth Williams getting sucked into Spielberg's "twilight zone."



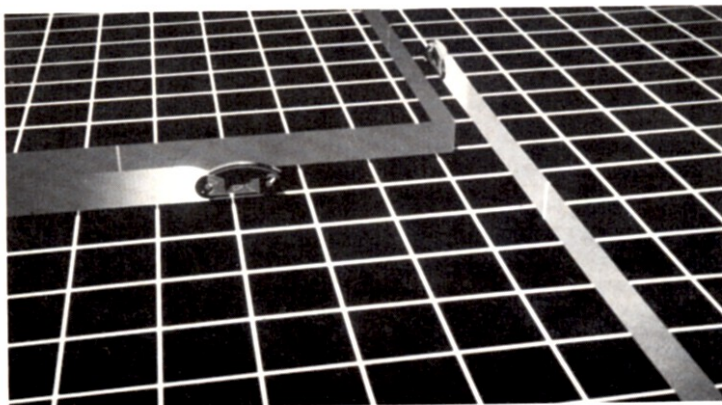
Mr. Spielberg, meet Mr. Matheson

Those who have perceived POLTERGEIST as an effective, big-budget TWILIGHT ZONE episode might not be far off the mark. Although Steven Spielberg has remained quiet on the subject, knowledgeable viewers have noticed more than a passing resemblance of "the first real ghost story" to "Little Girl Lost," a Richard Matheson TWILIGHT ZONE episode first aired in 1962.

Matheson's teleplay (based on his previously published short story) concerns the frantic efforts of a warm, supportive family in rescuing their young daughter from the grip of a netherworld dimension. One night, the little girl rolls out of bed and falls through a bilocated hole that has mysteriously appeared in her bedroom wall. After hearing her voice weirdly floating throughout the house, the parents enlist the aid of a scientist familiar with extra-dimensional theory, before the father finally enters the hole himself and pulls his daughter back into the real world—tightly held in his arms. Sound familiar?

Even more interesting is another, little-known Matheson tale titled "Through Channels." Told in the style of a tape-recorded police transcript, this story details the hysterical testimony of a teenaged boy whose entire family has been slaughtered by vague, amorphous creatures which emerged from the family's television set.

It's possible that Spielberg unconsciously went to the same general sources of inspiration that all writers have. More recently, Spielberg consciously went to Matheson for the script for THE TWILIGHT ZONE movie. One has to speculate, though, what Matheson felt after viewing Spielberg's latest blockbuster. *Nick Andes*



Bruce Boxleitner as videogame warrior Tron (left), and a computer generated shot of speeding "light" cycles.

So what if it's dumb, it's a dazzling light show

TRON

A Buena Vista release, 7, 82, 96 mins. In color, 70mm, and Megascound. Written and directed by Steven Lisberger. Produced by Donald Kushner. Executive producer, Ron Miller. Cinematographer, Bruce Logan. Editor, Jeff Gouson. Music by Wendy Carlos. Production designer, Dean Edward Mitzner. Art directors, John Mansbridge, Al Roelofs. Set decoration by Roger Shook. Sound effects design and synthesis, Frank Serafine. Electronic world conceptual artists, Syd Mead, Jean "Moebius" Giraud, Peter Lloyd. Electronic world conceptual design by Jean Giraud, Richard Taylor. Visual effects concepts, Steven Lisberger. Visual effects supervision, Richard Taylor, Harrison Ellenshaw. Computer effects supervisor, Richard Taylor. Computer generated images by Magi Synthvision, Information, International Inc., Robert Abel & Associates, Digital Effects Inc.

Kevin Flynn Clu Jeff Bridges
 Alan Bradley Tron Bruce Boxleitner
 Ed Dillinger Sark David Warner
 Lora Yori Cindy Morgan
 Dr. Walter Gibbs Dumont Barnard Hughes
 Ram Dan Shor
 Crom Peter Jurasik
 Peter Sark's Lieutenant Tony Stephano

In the latest Travis McGee adventure, *Cinnamon Skin*, author John D. MacDonald comments upon the recent explosion of computer technology. McGee counted 20 kids in a computer software store and two hundred in a video arcade, and reflects, "Perfect distribution: the future managers, and the future managed ones." Both groups should be dazzled by *TRON*, the first motion picture to make extensive use of digital computer imaging, a revolutionary approach to animation that makes the improbable seem very real. So successful is the technique, in fact, that the film is nearly overwhelmed by its visual razzle-dazzle. Still, *TRON* is audacious, high-tech fun.

If there has been one Hollywood studio that has spent the last decade tilting at windmills, it has been Walt Disney Productions, whose sophomore comedies and benign adventure stories were spurned by audiences in the '70s. Today, the bulk of Disney's live-action projects are being developed by outside producers. *TRON* is a gamble, and was in development for two years before Disney agreed to commit \$18 million. Though Lisberger's script is slight and in some ways no different from many other "quest" adventures, the film's technological ambition has

marked it as a significant undertaking.

Computer animation in which objects are "built" from geometric shapes in three dimensions and manipulated by digital computer, has been utilized to tell the story of Flynn (Jeff Bridges), a young computer whiz who breaks into ENCOM's computer system, is "digitized," and sucked into the computer's innards. There he meets bizarre video warriors. Flynn allies himself with one named Tron (Bruce Boxleitner), and together they battle the frightful Master Control Program.

As realized by effects supervisors Richard Taylor and Harrison Ellenshaw, Tron's electronic world is a remarkable amalgam of fluorescent color, bizarre perspective, and explosive movement. Color values are generally (and wisely) somber. *TRON*'s 56 minutes of computer generated color would have been numbing if done in neon instead of pastel.

Lisberger's script is well-paced, with "real world" sequences timed to tone down the overpowering imagery of the computer environment. At times, though, the film's human drama cannot compete with the computerized splendor. Perhaps sensing as much, Lisberger offers a rather gratuitous love triangle that is more of a nuisance than a real plot element. The film effectively conveys a strong sense of danger, but Lisberger's attempt to snare our emotions must be scored a near-miss.

The real attraction of *TRON* is its slam-bang visual approach. Choreography of actors and effects is flawless, and Lisberger displays a nice feel of rhythmic action. Set pieces like an astonishing race of light-cycles and Flynn's inept piloting of a "recognizer" pursuit craft are exciting and exhilarating. Many of the computer-created images (notably the villains' tanks) are startling in their verisimilitude. Splendid sound effects and a glitzy electronic score by Wendy Carlos neatly complete the illusion of other-world reality.

The most provocative notion in Lisberger's script is that characters in the real world have counterparts in

the fantasy milieu a la *THE WIZARD OF OZ*. The five principals have dual roles; Tron and the other video warriors are not people, but programs who reflect the personalities of the computer operators who have created them. This is demonstrated by Flynn's encounter with a warrior who describes himself as "an actuarial program." He gives Flynn a smile and confides, "It's great helping people plan for their future." Egad, is there no escape from insurance salesmen?

Lisberger has wit, and does not demand that we regard his computer world with absolute seriousness. In a hilarious throw-away gag, Pac-Man is glimpsed on the villain's video monitor, and the electronic good guys have lines like, "They haven't built a circuit that could hold you!" Especially amusing is Flynn's ally Bit, a small piece of programmed information who can respond to queries only in the positive or negative. Oddly polygonal and free-floating, Bit is an electronic cousin to Tinker Bell, Jiminy Cricket, and is the one element of *TRON* that really says "Disney." The character is a cute gambit because Lisberger does not overdo it; Bit's role is only a bit.

Bruce Boxleitner and lovely Cindy Morgan are stuck with rather thankless hero and heroine roles, and are easily dominated by Jeff Bridges, who brings to the part of Flynn a sassy irreverence. The only lapses in Bridges' performance occur in some of the real-world scenes when he becomes unnecessarily strident. David Warner, not surprisingly, is splendid as the soulless villain.

TRON's vague coldness will prevent it from achieving classic status, but it is a diverting entertainment that will certainly be talked about. While the kids in the video game arcade and computer software shops may have to wait before they start doing battle within each other's programs, *TRON* points up the awesome potential of computer imaging and may become a landmark film. In the meantime, there's always Pac-Man. Er, anyone have a quarter?

David J. Hogan

FIREFOX

continued from page 45

nificantly—the long expected hijack takes place at dawn.

But after an hour-and-a-half of tension, *FIREFOX* surprisingly begins to lose its grip. The interplay of scenes between Gant in his cockpit and the Russian High Command fuming at their radar scopes isn't all that interesting.

Also, John Dykstra's Apogee company's effects are uneven. Much of what Dykstra provides is good. A number of technical innovations are used to remarkable effect including an inertial navigation system that was tied into the motion-control system to produce the flying shots, the use of motion-control systems on location, and a complicated front-projection system (utilizing a moving key light) that results in the most convincing pilot-in-a-cockpit scenes ever filmed.

Equally impressive are the cloud plates, the spume-laden sonic "footprint" that races behind the plane in a series of cannonading explosions; and stomach-loosening point of view shots as Eastwood accelerates from about 600 miles per hour to 3000 mph.

But Apogee was required to perform some near-insurmountable optical composites. It's one thing to put a spaceship against the velvet of space, yet another to put a white-bodied 747 against a pearly sky. At times matte-lines and image bleeding are painfully evident. And it's hard to forgive the Toho-like shot of an all-too-obvious MIG 31 model landing on an ice floe.

Yet despite the loss of interest and lapses in special effects, *FIREFOX* is a slick, involving thriller, set apart by its competence, technical groundbreaking and visual gloss. Most of all, however, the film is yet another example of Eastwood's easy, ongoing assurance as a filmmaker. It seems a shame that such a sturdy project as *FIREFOX* might be lost in the prop-wash of the most product-packed summer the genre has ever seen.

Paul Sammon

Clint Eastwood as Mitchell Gant.



It's Carpenter's most personal film . . . in spite of himself

THE THING

A Universal pictures release, 6 82, 108 mins. In color. Directed by John Carpenter. Written by Bill Lancaster based on the story "Who Goes There?" by John W. Campbell. Produced by David Foster. Co-produced by Stuart Cohen. Executive producer, Wilbur Stark. Cinematographer, Dean Cundey. Editor, Todd Ramsey. Music by Ennio Morricone. Production designer, John J. Lloyd. Set decorator, John Dwyer. Special makeup effects creation and design by Rob Bottin. Special visual effects by Albert Whitlock. Special effects by Roy Arbogast. Sound by Thomas Causey.

MacReady Kurt Russell
Blair A. Wilford Brimley
Nauls T. K. Carter
Palmer David Glenison
Childs Keith David

John Carpenter's new version of the *THE THING*, like all his work, is more an elaboration on his superficial interests than a revealing personal statement. Carpenter's mercurial public image matches the changeable nature of the monster in *THE THING*. We never glimpse The Thing in a totally personal formation; it is constantly donning the guises of other personalities, just as Carpenter is prone to duck behind his heroes rather than burn brilliantly as the original artist responsible for *HALLOWEEN*. But just *this* comparison makes *THE THING* Carpenter's most personal film . . . in spite of himself.

Perhaps because of his love for director Howard Hawks (who made the original movie, *THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD*) and John W. Campbell's source novella *Who Goes There?*, Carpenter's decision to remake *THE THING* was a natural. By taking on his great idol, Howard Hawks, Carpenter's movie acts as something of a graduation. He isolates Hawks' 1951 treatment of this idea with two perfect, brief allusions to the earlier film and then Carpenter proceeds to liberate himself from that belabored apprenticeship and make his own movie.

He clearly has learned how to weigh his scholastic debts, how to accredit the wind of other men in his sails without letting their ghosts steer the ship. In fact, Carpenter's film is to Hawks' *THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD* what Philip Kaufman's film is to Don Siegel's *INVASION OF THE BODYSNATCHERS*: a *revision*, as opposed to a *remake*.

There is other evidence of Carpenter's growing assurance as a director. He cut his usual repertory of players to one traditional actor, Kurt Russell, whose bearish manly looks and cynical alienation embody the movie's primary conflict without straining to appear symbolic. Also, for the first time in his career, Carpenter has left his music scoring to another composer, Ennio Morricone, who unfortunately strove to reproduce the electronic Carpenter *ambience*, instead of suffusing the score with his *own* personality.

A featherweight ending leaves the movie feeling disappointingly top-heavy, and carries an ashen tag of artistic exhaustion. Most of *THE THING*, however, is marvelous, all of it is intriguing and Carpenter's in-jokes (which trivialized *ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK*) are largely, and happily, self-directed.

Rob Bottin and his 40-person effects crew created a consistent catalogue of the most startling and mysterious special makeup effects ever showcased in a horror film. Bottin's work on *THE THING* makes his contribution to *THE HOWLING*—which looked state-of-the-art only last year—seem down-right primitive; how far can this type of escalation in shock effects continue?

Not only is each effects sequence eye-popping in itself, but Carpenter's pensive choreography renders each new effect more potent and punchy than the one before. The first effect appears after a great deal of handsomely subdued, brooding footage involving a Norwegian dog (actually The Thing) and, when the effect comes, it leaps right off the screen. (This dog kennel sequence, the last to be shot, was executed by Stan Winston while Bottin was hospitalized with pneumonia.) It is a dizzying display of techno-magical proficiency.

THE THING's moister moments also are indicative of Carpenter's regained willingness to play ball in the gory arena, having deliberately steered clear of heavy bloodletting since a little girl was shot vividly through the chest in *ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13* (he believes the film became a commercial disaster *because* of that scene). Ironically, *THE THING* has not done well commercially (see sidebar), perhaps for the same reason.

But willingness isn't necessarily readiness. The autopsy scenes in *THE THING* are not as uncomfortable to watch as they are *handled* uncomfortably by the director. Carpenter insists that his audience share his sense of repulsion. Cinematographer Dean Cundy's reaction shots of surgeon Blair (A. Wilford Brimley) during these syrupy moments are much grainier than the surrounding footage, as if Carpenter wanted to use the texture of the image to suggest his, and Blair's, creeping nausea.

Unlike some critics, I believe that screenwriter Bill Lancaster's cast of characters is personable, ponderable, and engaging in a host of complex ways. Using only one Hawksian nickname ("Windows"), each of Carpenter's and Lancaster's 12 Antarctic outpostmen is individualized by his indulgences (J&B scotch, dope, roller-skates, videotapes, caring for dogs) while, they are also melded into a whole by these indulgences which



Rob Bottin's makeup effects transform Norris into The Thing during an autopsy.

exist to numb them to the reality of their regional divorce from the rest of humanity. A pack of asexual, apathetic, unsociable outcasts, it befalls them to save humanity from this unsuspected horror, and they are made heroic by the humanness of their response.

THE THING may be "gross" (as the people behind me kept insisting through most of its running time), but it is also an incorrigibly clever movie.

In one exterior night shot, while Russell is telling his assembled colleagues how the Thing can't be present in *all* of them, else they would be ganging-up on him, Carpenter directs his camera in a pan across the attentive, thermawear faces. With winter parkas and ski-masks concealing everything but their eyes, the image mockingly echoes the idea of alien intelligence hiding in a human husk.

Also, in the outpost's recreation room, a poster can be glimpsed of a pretty girl wearing a tag that reads, "I have VD!" and, above her, the caption, *They aren't labelled, chum!* Of course, by the end of this paranoid parable, no one is. **Tim Lucas**

It's gruesome, but is it makeup?

Roger Ebert of the *Chicago Sun Times* wrote: "THE THING is the barf-bag movie of July, all right, but is it any good?"

For most movie reviewers at least, there was an easy answer. The gory special effects created by designer Rob Bottin overwhelmed the picture. David Ansen of *Newsweek* wrote, "In sacrificing everything at the altar of gore, [director John] Carpenter sabotages the drama." *Variety* agreed, pointing out that "if the special effects weren't so repellent, they would truly be wonders to behold."

Receipts for *THE THING*, as of July 21, were a disappointing \$13.8 million. Universal has not released more current figures and the film has now virtually dropped from distribution. Adding insult to injury, the Makeup and Hair Stylists Local 706 fined Universal \$10,000 in a dispute over Rob Bottin's title. The union argued that Bottin, credited with creating "special makeup effects," did not provide makeup, but "mechanical devices, mannequins and non-living things." The decision might disqualify Bottin from competing for the Oscar awarded to makeup. Bottin declined to comment.

The prodigal son returns to the delight of trekkies everywhere

STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN

A Paramount Pictures release, 6 82, 113 mins. In color, scope, and Dolby stereo. Directed by Nicholas Meyer. Produced by Robert Sallin. Screenplay by Jack Sowards. Cinematographer, Gayne Rescher. Production designer, Joseph R. Jennings. Executive consultant, Gene Roddenberry. Special visual effects produced at Industrial Light and Magic, a division of Lucasfilm, Ltd.

[For complete cast and credits see 125/126:52]

Admiral James T. Kirk.....William Shatner
 Captain Spock.....Leonard Nimoy
 Dr. Leonard McCoy.....DeForest Kelley
 Engineer Montgomery Scott.....James Doohan
 Chekov.....Walter Koenig
 Lt. Saavik.....Kirstie Alley
 Khan.....Ricardo Montalban

STAR TREK has moved from nostalgia to cult to myth, and STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN is very much aware of that fact. STAR TREK II has been so carefully thought out, in terms of its past popularity, that after leaving the theater one expects it to be 1967 all over again.

Although lacking the vastly underrated STAR TREK—THE MOTION PICTURE's sense of grandeur, STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN (a title supposedly changed at the eleventh hour from THE VENGEANCE OF KHAN due to a quiet protest by Lucasfilm, who felt its syn-

tax too close to their upcoming REVENGE OF THE JEDI) neatly scores off most of the tried and true elements which kept the television series successfully going in the first place.

There's the banter between Spock (Leonard Nimoy) and McCoy (DeForest Kelly); there's the admixture of pyrotechnics and character. But most of all, STAR TREK II insists on story, story, story. The same system of putting plot over effects that was the bulwark of STAR TREK's airwaves success. It's not surprising to learn that STAR TREK II's director, Nicholas Meyer, had his greatest previous triumphs as a novelist.

While the core of STAR TREK—THE MOTION PICTURE was Spock's realization of the significance of "simple feeling" over logic, STAR TREK II belongs entirely to Admiral James T. Kirk. William Shatner has an arresting entrance (heavily backlit), the spotlight and all the best lines (and Meyer is to be commended for sitting tight on an actor who seems to have built a career on unaringly going over the edge).

Not to slight the characterizations (sharp), the dialogue (snappy) or the pacing (sleek), but it is, I think, the

emphasis on minutiae that makes STAR TREK II so thoroughly enjoyable. The Ben Franklin glasses that Kirk wears throughout the film serve as a witty prop for Kirk's mid-life crisis. The historical artifacts on his San Francisco apartment wall, the deliciously nasty extraterrestrial earwig that slithers in and out of Walter Koenig's (Chekov) ear, and much more, accumulate to give STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN the complexity and detail of an honorable little novella.

Fans of the TV series haven't been forgotten either. Khan is a holdover from STAR TREK's first season and little clues have been littered through the script for the more knowledgeable to pick up. Koenig uncovers a copy of *Paradise Lost* in Khan's desert home (a scrap of that epic poem was recited by Ricardo Montalban at the conclusion of "Space Seed," the episode in which Khan made his initial appearance), and John Winston, who had a small, intermittent role as Kyle on the old series reappears in STAR TREK II in, amusingly, a similarly tiny part.

There is even a plot update for the uninitiated by having Montalban recount the circumstances leading up to his imprisonment, even to the

point of including a reference to Khan's wife, a part played in the "Space Seed" episode by Madlyn Rhue.

Not all of STAR TREK II's attention to detail works well, however. The underdeveloped sub-plot concerning Kirk's son seems a cynical throwaway aimed to capitalize on THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK's Darth Vader/Luke Skywalker kinship. Additionally, Montalban is much too gray to have been marooned for 15 years with genetic comrades who have stayed so glaringly young. And Spock's much-anticipated Sidney Carton-like death, despite its foreshadowing by the Vulcan's gift to Kirk of an old edition of A TALE OF TWO CITIES, simply trades on our feelings for the character.

Within its own framework, STAR TREK II never constructs the proper emotional justification for Spock's demise. Besides, it's difficult to work up a lump in the throat when one recalls how often STAR TREK's primary characters were killed and revived throughout the run of the series ("He's dead, Jim"). Does anyone actually expect Leonard Nimoy to be missing from STAR TREK III?

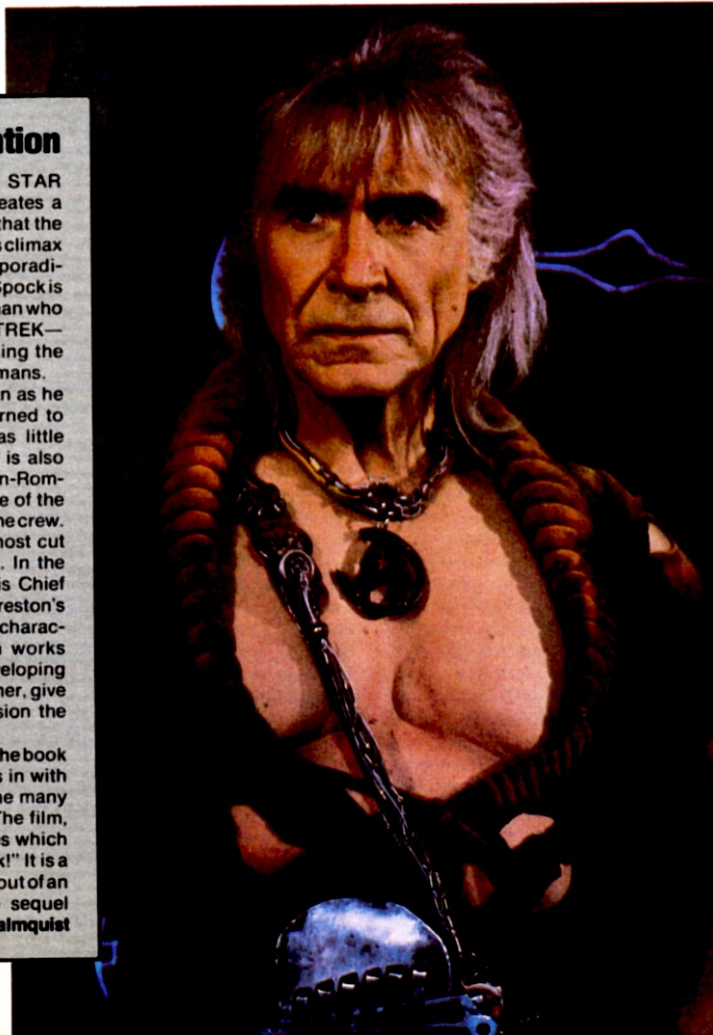
STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN's most curious failure, though, lies in its inability to stay long with the mind; in this respect the film is something like a familiar, but well-cooked meal that, once digested is forgotten. And cinematically, STAR TREK II is rather pedestrian. Meyer handles his cast and wide-screen compositions resourcefully (there's a particularly good emphasis on full-frame computer graphics), and he's come a long way from the frozen groupings that stopped TIME AFTER TIME, his directorial debut, dead in its tracks.

But STAR TREK II was executed by Paramount's television arm, and it looks it. As for the effects, despite excellent starfields and nebulas, gleefully kinetic starship battles and a riveting 60 second computer simulation of the Genesis Effect, the overall feeling is that this was one of ILM's factory jobs. This lack of special effects impact is probably due to tight scheduling, as the ongoing use of stock effects footage from the first film suggests.

But from the first familiar bars of music from the show's old theme song to the *Amazing Grace* played at Spock's funeral in the Enterprise's photon torpedo room, STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN is captivating entertainment. It even, and finally, introduces the first justifiable new crew member, a sensual, intriguing half Vulcan/half Romulan named Saavik (Kirstie Alley). In fact, despite the pulp, STAR TREK II will probably breed millions of born again Trekkies all over the galaxy.

Paul Sammon

Ricardo Montalban as Khan Noonian Singh, the aging genetic superman, who seeks revenge on Captain Kirk.



Star Trek: The Novelization

Vonda McIntyre's novelization of STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN creates a depth of feeling and characterization that the movie misses. Even though the movie's climax centers on Spock, he appears only sporadically throughout the film. In the book, Spock is a much more interesting character, a man who has evolved (as indicated in STAR TREK—TMP) to find his own peace—combining the logic of Vulcan and the emotion of humans.

Much of Spock's character is shown as he tries to teach the lessons he has learned to Lieutenant Saavik. Saavik receives as little screen time as Spock and her story is also much expanded in the novel. Her Vulcan-Romulan heritage makes her character one of the most complex and interesting among the crew.

Another key character that was almost cut from the film is Cadet Peter Preston. In the novel, it is made clear that Preston is Chief Engineer Scotty's nephew. Through Preston's presence we learn more about Scotty's character. Kirk's relationship with his son works better, too. Scenes showing David developing a respect for the Enterprise and his father, give the young scientist an added dimension the movie left to the imagination.

Spock's death makes more sense in the book because it is presented as final. It ties in with the theme of sacrificing oneself for the many which surfaced earlier in the story. The film, however, ends with a barrage of clues which literally shout out, "Spock will be back!" It is a cheap tactic to blatantly ring emotion out of an audience—more a device of movie sequel makers than novelists.

Allen Malmquist



E.T.

It's Steven Spielberg's finest film—a masterpiece of beauty, poetry, childhood and love. E.T. is a joy.

by David J. Hogan

Early in Steven Spielberg's *E.T.*, an adolescent boy knowingly comments to his friends, "You don't win at life." The pronouncement is a cynical one that Spielberg clearly does not himself believe. Life itself, the director tells us, is victory.

The arrival of *E.T.*, a little visitor from the stars, sparks a story that is profound, but not preachy, and that shows us—with warmth and nimble wit—the power of love, responsibility and

the special sanctuary of childhood.

E.T.—THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL is Spielberg's finest and most moving film. In a decade, he has evolved from a purveyor of clever, faintly mechanical diversissements, into America's most accessible pop humanist. He is a magician who lets us believe in magic. *E.T.* is a joy.

When the pattern of normal suburban existence is disrupted by the extraterrestrial visitor of the film's title, Spielberg returns to a vision of American life that seems very dear to him. The innate

truthfulness of his white, upwardly-mobile society is not diminished by its narrowness. His people have intelligence and an easy grace about them. Life is alright, but not great. Elliott (Henry Thomas) has no father; Dad has run off to Mexico with another woman, leaving behind three kids, the split level, the Audi and Mom.

Dee Wallace's performance as the abandoned wife is heartbreakingly good. Frustrated and unhappy, the lady rises above her situation in order to give her

children values and a measure of joy. She can still roll with a punch; when Elliott, in a sudden fit of pique, explodes and calls his older brother "penis-breath," his mother scolds him even as she struggles to suppress a laugh. In Spielberg's suburbia, laughter is where one finds it.

And so is responsibility. Without a father to guide him, Elliott occasionally lapses into hurtful thoughtlessness. His life seems to be a series of mild adversary relationships. The extraterrestrial—abandoned when his compan-

ions flee the adults who have discovered their ship—has special needs, and awakens in Elliott a gentle maturity that we never doubt the boy is capable of.

Melissa Mathison's insightful screenplay allows Elliott to work out his own feelings of dismay and abandonment through the frightfully vulnerable visitor who so desperately needs his help. Spielberg obviously has an intense belief in the film's uplifting thesis—the sheer heart of Elliott and E.T. is astonishing. Their bond becomes so strong that nearly anything is possible.

At one point, Wallace reads aloud from *Peter Pan*, and the storybook wonderment is realized when Elliott (with E.T. in tow) giddily pedals his bicycle into the night sky and across the face of the full moon. A classical fantasy image has been placed in a modern context, and Spielberg shows us that magic can be real if we only insist upon it.

The themes of the film are serious, and Spielberg deftly avoids the heavy-handedness that could have ensnared a lesser director. The film never lectures. Spielberg has an uncanny knack for utilizing the flotsam of pop culture to touch us even as we are being entertained.

For example, E.T. watches a scene from *THIS ISLAND EARTH* with quiet interest, and learns English through the help of the *SESAME STREET* muppets. On Halloween, Elliott disguises his new friend with a sheet and takes him out for trick-or-treat. When E.T. is passed by a child wearing a Yoda mask, his immediate impulse is to turn and follow. Has a Hollywood director ever been as avuncular?

The film stumbles a bit when it explores a symbiotic relationship between Elliott and E.T. that turns out to be a vital element of the denouement. The idea—that whatever E.T. feels Elliott feels—isn't bad, but the link is not adequately explained or rationalized. A classroom segment in which Elliott grows tipsy as E.T. guzzles Coors at home is undeniably funny, but is brought in from left field. Later, when E.T. gazes at the television and sees John Wayne plant a big kiss on Maureen O'Hara, Elliott does the same to his pretty classmate. It's as though Spielberg grew up adoring *THE QUIET MAN* and was determined to pay homage, no matter what.

Otherwise, the masterly rhythm—Spielberg's camerawork and staging—seem so right. A moment in which E.T. waddles undetected behind Dee Wallace is priceless, and when Elliott introduces his new friend to his older brother (Robert Macnaughton) and younger sister (Drew Barrymore), the audience explodes in hysteria.

The dark side of human nature is cleverly represented by the faceless government agents who relentlessly search the neighborhood. Full of stamp and clatter, they are less men than a collection of distasteful symbols: heavy boots, jangling keys and sinister black vehicles with snorting tail pipes. They finally invade Elliott's home and we recoil at the horrid absurdity of it all, for the men are dressed in space suits that have the

American flag on the shoulder.

Government authority and Big Brotherism are easy targets, of course, and Spielberg has the insight to avoid stacking the deck. A government scientist tries to explain his feelings to Elliott: "I've waited for this," the man says, looking at E.T., "since I was 10 years old." But the system has done more harm than good, and E.T. seems to be dying. Elliott, too, is deathly ill, and the film's ultimate beauty lies in the fact that each of the friends is willing to sacrifice himself in order to save the other.

Carlo Rambaldi's remote-controlled creature is nothing short of miraculous. The creature's wizened, remarkably expressive face and stumpy legs (which neatly circumvent the problems of simulating walking) are a delight. The eyes, in particular, seem to express sensitivity and intellect. Even the most cynical audience cannot help responding to this wonderful creature.

The reason for the response goes beyond the kindly face and Ben Burt's whimsical voice design. E.T., simply, is us. The little fellow embodies all the finest qualities of our species: bravery, humor, curiosity, resiliency and a capacity for love. He is sufficiently childlike to spurn potato salad in favor of Reese's Pieces, yet is clever enough to contact his people with a device jury-rigged from an umbrella, a fork and a calculator.

Like *THE WIZARD OF OZ*, E.T. has more than its share of timeless moments, wonderful bits of business that will be remembered fondly by film buffs for decades to come. Few farewells in screen history can match the final, loving hug shared by Elliott and his friend as E.T. prepares to return home. As the ship lifts off, we know that it is not a parting, but a new phase of a lovely partnership that will stay with the boy forever.

John Williams' score is rich and humanistic, and Dennis Muren provides flawless special effects. Every performance is a gem; Henry Thomas is a child actor of unusual range and conviction. And we should look forward with anticipation to Melissa Mathison's next screenplay.

There can not be any argument, though, that E.T. belongs to Steven Spielberg. The film is a major leap forward for this adventurous and gifted filmmaker. His warmth and sincerity, matched by an awesome technical skill, mark him as a significant cultural voice. Still in his early 30s, Spielberg will continue to grow; there can be no doubt that the best is yet to come.

Not simply science fiction, and more than just a tribute to the spirit of Peter Pan, E.T. is sweet and gentle poetry for us all. □

E.T.

A Universal Pictures release, 6:02, 115 mins. In color, 70mm and Dolby stereo. Directed by Steven Spielberg. Written by Melissa Mathison. Produced by Spielberg and Kathleen Kennedy. Cinematographer, Allen Daviau. Editor, Carol Littleton. Music by John Williams. Production designer, James D. Bissell. E.T. created by Carlo Rambaldi. Special visual effects produced at Industrial Light and Magic. ILM supervisor, Dennis Muren.

Mary.....Dee Wallace
Elliott.....Henry Thomas
Keys.....Peter Coyote
Michael.....Robert Macnaughton
Gertie.....Drew Barrymore



E.T. AND ME:

A few words about E.T., from the men who helped bring him to life.

By Michael Kaplan

The title character of this year's smash hit has been hailed as an artistic and technological breakthrough—a \$1.5 million wonder boy. Although he is certainly among the screen's most endearing and convincing fantasy creations, E.T. is not unique, owing something of his origins to such characters as Yoda, R2D2, the drones of *SILENT RUNNING* and even, perhaps, to King Kong.

More directly, E.T. owes his existence to a century's worth of screen magic—illusion, substitution and skillful editing—which creates a single, believable being out of at least half a dozen rubber and plastic shells, and dozens of tried-and-true effects techniques.

Originally, when the project was conceived (under the title *NIGHT SKIES*, see 11:17), the extraterrestrial *would* have been as much an engineering marvel as a pop idol. Rick Baker (*AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON*, *KING KONG*) was hired to develop several complex aliens using state-of-the-art techniques. The result was said to be startling, but Baker was fired by Spielberg over budgetary squabbles before the work left the prototype stage.

Spielberg next turned to Carlo Rambaldi, who had been called in for the ending of *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS* after several other attempts at a realistic alien were deemed unsuitable. For E.T., Rambaldi eschewed Baker's innovative

technology, relying instead on the kind of cable- and radio-controlled mechanisms he used for *ALIEN* and *CE3K*. In addition, a variety of relatively simple techniques were relied upon, including hand puppets and midgets in suits.

Although Rambaldi has received the lion's share of the credit for the design and construction of E.T., several major aspects of the creature had to be farmed out, either because he and his staff were too busy to tackle a particular assignment, or because the finished work was considered sub-par. For example, makeup artist Craig Reardon, who was heavily involved with Spielberg's *POLTERGEIST* (see 12:5/12:6:11), was called in shortly before filming began to paint the alien's rubber skin, which determined the final look of the creature.

"They [Rambaldi's staff] had done a couple of paint jobs which were simply crude," said Reardon, who is credited as a "special artistic consultant" on the film. "It didn't look alive."

Working with a prototype head, Reardon created a leathery, blotchy brown skin, and showed it to Spielberg, who gave the okay. "We did a film test, and a few final adjustments were made, and then I went ahead and painted six entire bodies at Rambaldi's studio, where all the skins were," he said. "I think, at that point, Rambaldi was happy to get one more thing scratched off his list. He was getting a little apprehensive, because the filming date was getting awfully close, and he



Far Left: Robert Short attaches the latex arms to the plastic "heart-light" chest. **Above:** Don Pennington and Lucy Seaman adjust the brace that supported E.T.'s mechanical head. Note the thin dowels protruding from the elbows, a muppet-like arm movement. Cables leading out the back of the chest were attached to air bladders, which made the heart pulsate. **Left:** The completed chest, painted to match the foam latex versions.

was feeling the heat daily from [co-producer] Kathy Kennedy."

In addition to painting the latex skins, Reardon was also asked to develop E.T.'s oversized eyes and glowing chest—assignments ultimately completed by others. Rambaldi's crew had already taken shots at both the eyes and heart, but apparently didn't have the time to perfect the work before the start of shooting. "They had a preliminary heart effect, which wasn't very convincing," Reardon explained. "They felt they had to draft some additional talent."

The problem with the glowing

chest was the inch-thick foam latex skin Rambaldi had designed to slip over the creature's mechanical armature. "There was no space between the skin and the mechanics in which to install a light, plus an animated system of organs. Another problem was that they wanted the chest to appear to be opaque for most of the time, but, at will, they wanted it to appear to be transparent. It was like asking for the impossible!"

Reardon sculpted an inch-high bas-relief heart and lung system, equipped with bladders to inflate and deflate, and began to tackle the other technical problems, including

finding a clear plastic that was as flexible as Rambaldi's latex skins, a light source powerful enough to register on camera, and a way to cool it so it wouldn't set the suit on fire.

Before he could complete the job, however, Reardon was called back on *POLTERGEIST*, then fell ill due to exhaustion. With just two weeks left prior to the start of filming, effects coordinator Mitch Suskin turned to Robert Short, whom he had worked with on several projects in the past, including *STAR TREK-TMP* and *POLTERGEIST*.

"I got the impression that the heart-light concept was going to be scrapped," said Short, a sculptor who also created the plant life fleetingly seen inside E.T.'s spaceship. Rather than scrap the heart-light entirely, Spielberg decided to settle for a simpler set-up, geared specifically for a key shot near the film's climax.

"I came up with idea of making up an entirely new chest [for insert shots], using Rambaldi's molds to vacuum-form a transparent plastic body, then do a paint job blending in to a clear area in the chest," Short explained. "We built soft organs that acted like balloons—we pumped air in and out of them to make them beat—and put them all on a plexiglass sheet. We put a quartz-halogen light behind that to get the intensity we needed, and then ran an air conditioning unit through the whole thing."

Short's chest was fitted with a brace to support E.T.'s mechanical head, which was supplied by Rambaldi. The entire assembly was then supported on a steel pipe—there were no legs—which could be raised, lowered and swiveled.

The design of E.T.'s innards was left to Short and Suskin, who used vegetable shapes to create a surrealistic, rather than anatomical effect. "Spielberg wanted to see the organs

heaving and pumping with light showing through, and the whole concept was rather gross," Short explained. "The trick was coming up with something that—although you're seeing his innards—is still rather pleasing, so there was still the warmth and glow of the universe."

"It's a fantasy version of what a plant would have inside it, if a plant had internal organs," Short continued. "The heart, for example, was based on a gourd."

When Short delivered the heart-light chest, Spielberg was so pleased that he decided to use it throughout the film, despite its rigidity and limited mobility. "After they got the first shot they wanted, they took it off the stand and set it on the ground, laid it on its back and did all kinds of things with it," said Short.

"I also made up a chest application that fit *over* the suit worn by the midgets," he added. "It simulated the 'heart-light' for long shots, including the E.T. walking up to his ship, and standing out in the forest."

Both Reardon and Short are delighted—but nevertheless a little surprised—at the enormous response E.T. has generated. "It's been a tickle to be associated with a film that has just gone through the ceiling," said Reardon. "Whatever its artistic merits, I like it and it entertains me."

Added Short: "I don't think any of the crew really expected it to catch on as big as it did. But we all thought the film was something special."

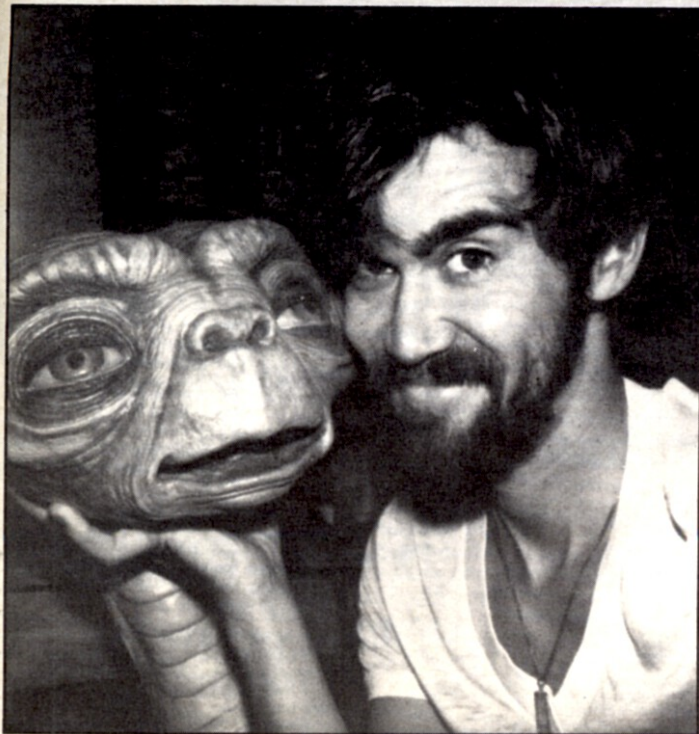
Although their supporting work on the film hasn't had any immediate professional benefits for Reardon or Short, it *has* made them something of a hit on the dinner party circuit: According to Short, a typical conversation might go like this:

"I just saw E.T."

"Bob Short just came in. He worked on E.T.!"

"You mean, he knows E.T. personally? Wow!" □

Craig Reardon—who painted the alien's latex skin—gives a warm hug to E.T.



LETTERS

IN DEFENSE OF NIMOY

Your recent feature on STAR TREK II—THE WRATH OF KHAN [12:5/12:6:50] takes an unexpected nosedive towards the gutter when author Kay Anderson discusses Leonard Nimoy's feelings about the character of Mr. Spock.

Relying on gossip rather than fact, she tries to perpetuate the myth that Nimoy hates the role. However, on many occasions Mr. Nimoy has stated that he is perfectly willing to portray the character, provided the material is good and preserves the integrity of the role. Ironically, the author could have found this out by actually reading the *I Am Not Spock* book, rather than using its title for her own purposes. This type of journalism mars an otherwise very readable article, and seems more suited for the *National Enquirer* than your magazine. Although I subscribe to your policy of giving authors a free hand, some editorial prudence seems to be in order.

A. Achterberg
Pasadena, California

I must admit that I enjoyed most of Kay Anderson's article on STAR TREK II. I stopped enjoying it, however, when, for no apparent reason, Ms. Anderson began attacking the personal motives and personal character of Leonard Nimoy.

I challenge Ms. Anderson to identify her sources. I am sure that Mr. Nimoy has more professional pride than to take a job just for the money, as she claimed. On the other hand, there is no reason that he should do it for next to nothing, which is what the studio reportedly offered him. As to the "hatred" that the author says Mr. Nimoy feels towards Spock, I do not know of any time he has made any such statement or intended to imply any such thing.

Ms. Anderson's lack of professionalism in attacking Mr. Nimoy has damaged the credibility of herself and your magazine. It is my hope that, in the future, personal vendettas based on distorted facts, misinterpreted statements, and lack of proper research will not appear in your pages.

L. Dale Martin
Clackamas, Oregon

Kay Anderson's response: Leonard Nimoy's attitude towards Spock—his love-hate relationship with the character—and his ambivalence about reprising the role in the movie versions of STAR TREK are a matter of record. The subject came up often enough during the 27 interviews I conducted for this article for it to be pertinent to the making of STAR TREK II, and perhaps future STAR TREK films.

There are always certain fans of an actor who regard anything less than unqualified praise as a malicious attack. But it is ludicrous to suggest that Nimoy has been consistently mis-



ONE ISSUE FOR THE PRICE OF TWO COVERS?

I wonder how many people paid for two issues of your latest double issue—covering the making of STAR TREK II and BLADE-RUNNER—only to find after they got home that they had the same issue, only with a different cover. Come on! You've never done this before, why start now? Do you need the extra \$7.95 per issue? Do you think all hardcore magazine fans would lay down \$7.95 just for another nice cover? I'm very upset, and I don't think it was a good idea to have two covers. I think the solution would have been to use one of the covers as a title page for the inside article. I never thought your magazine

was priced too high, but this time I just had to say something!

Delbert Winans
Los Angeles, California

It's true that we've never printed two covers for a single issue before. But we had never combined two issue-length articles in a single volume before, either. We had considered a number of alternatives to the twin covers—including printing the second cover on the back of the issue—but decided that two covers would be the least confusing. We never planned on tricking readers into spending any extra money—it was strictly a marketing solution.

quoted and misunderstood over a period of more than a decade. Nimoy is an intelligent, talented and complex man, but his actions are not above reproach.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE ADJECTIVES?

It's very, very okay with me any time anyone credits me with having written any of Lawrence Kasdan's scripts, even just the pronouns, even just the commas. But I'll bet Mr. Kasdan won't like it. Therefore, I should point out that your magazine is in error when it says I worked on REVENGE OF THE JEDI. I didn't.

David Webb Peoples
Berkeley, California

Note: We mentioned that David Peoples—who rewrote the script to BLADE RUNNER—was also involved in a rewrite of REVENGE OF THE JEDI [12:5/12:6:26]. We were wrong, and regret the error.

GETTING A FEW "THINGS" STRAIGHT

Being an old-timer, the stand-out

piece in your last issue was George Turner's retrospect on Howard Hawks' THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD [12:5/12:6:79]. When I just starting out as an illustrator, John W. Campbell [author of the movie's source novel, *Who Goes There?*] was my very first client, and I would often try to get him to talk about the movie. While I think he was deeply disappointed by the film's deviation from his central concept of the alien, he had a kind of grudging respect for what Hawks had done with the material. He was particularly pleased by the fact that the film has so captured the mood of his story.

But the idea of the alien was very important to Campbell. The concept for the creature grew out of Campbell's own childhood fears: his mother and her sister were identical twins, and his aunt would sometimes pretend that she was John's mother so that he wouldn't be alarmed by her absence. I think you can appreciate why John Campbell never really felt that THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD was really his story.

Vincent Di Fate
Wappingers Falls, New York

You proclaimed that THE THING was the first alien invader movie. But just as ROCKETSHIP XM beat DESTINATION MOON into the theaters, so THE MAN FROM PLANET X appears to have gotten the jump on Hawks' film. THE THING was copyrighted on April 4, 1951, and opened in New York May 2. Meanwhile, PLANET X had its New York premiere April 7, 1951, although it wasn't copyrighted until April 27.

In addition, your coverage was rather inexact concerning the use Hawks made of Campbell's story. The 1951 film is actually quite faithful to the first third of *Who Goes There?*, which relates the discovery, unfreezing, pursuit and electrocution of the alien. Only after it's killed is the absorption/transformation aspect developed. Hawks recognized that the story contained material for two different kinds of movies, and not surprisingly chose to make the action-adventure rather than the psychological horror one.

David Balsom
Portland, Oregon

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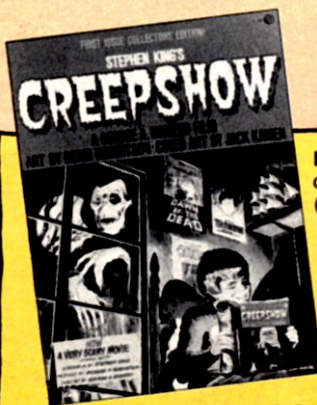
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